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The White Wizard; OR, The Great Prophet of the Seminoles.

BY NED BUNTLINE.

CHAPTER I.

ALONG the whole southern and western coast of Florida, from the ancient Fort of St. Marks to Key West, there were no settlements, and only a few Spanish fishing stations at Tampa Bay, Manatee, Boca Grande, and Sanibel, at the date when we draw the curtain of the drama which we offer to the reader, nearly forty years ago.

A gale was blowing, a terrific gale, from the south-east, rolling up the waves from the Bay of Mexico—as that portion inside of the Gulf has been named—and sending them on the sandy shore, where they broke in lofty walls of foam. So fiercely did the tempest rage that the Spanish fishermen could not pursue their avocation! They were obliged to lay their nets out upon the inner branch of the point of Boca Grande, where their ranche was established, and seek refuge in the low, palmetto-thatched huts built for their shelter, which, tho' located in a ravine, where the wind had not full play upon them, seemed hardly strong enough to withstand the gale.

Here, smoking their cigarettes, they huddled, some cursing and grumbling at the weather; others uttering a prayer, now and then, to San Antonio—all discontented and out of sorts. Suddenly, however, the booming of cannonry—and that close at hand—startled all of them to their feet, and with one idea they rushed simultaneously out to see what could be off that coast in such a storm, and why the cannon were fired. On reaching the elevated point that bounds to the south the narrow entrance to the bay, which extends far back into the swamps and wilds of the country, they saw a large schooner, foretopsail rig, evidently armed heavily and with a full crew, standing in toward the coast, under a fearful press of canvas. And only about a mile nearer, but so close to the shore that the persons of those on board of her could be plainly seen, was a small but beautiful schooner-boat—no more than five or six tons burthen, and but partially decked over, yet she rode the sea like a duck, and seemed to cut the water as a bird cleaves the air. Upon her deck were three persons—a man, who stood at the helm, a lovely female, who clung to the weather shroud a few feet before him, and by the hand

she held a little girl, whose glossy ringlets fluttered out like pennons on the gale.

Against this boat and its helpless crew, to the wonder of the Spaniards, the cannonade of the large, black-sided schooner was directed. To their surprise, the more, because the schooner showed no flag, and did not seem, by her looks, to be either a *Guarda Costa* or a man-of-war.

"*Es una Pirata*—it is a pirate"—they muttered, and, crossing themselves, they prayed earnestly for the escape of "*El galetta chica*"—the little schooner—and some of the more earnest of them ran down to the point, and by beckonings and signals, endeavored to direct the

iards hoped for that bold steersman's safety, for he seemed to bear a charmed life—Death came so near and yet refrained.

He was now upon the outer range of breakers which broke across the bar—nobly his lovely boat rose upon them—reeling and staggering before the gale, in she sped through the yeast of foam; a moment more and she was in smooth water. A glad hurrah rose from the lips of the fishermen, but its echoes were hushed in the fearful burst of the schooner's whole broadside, as she rounded to, scarce a half mile off, and threw a shower of grape and cannister at the hapless fugitives. With a shudder, they turned

to see its effects. They groaned and beat their breasts as they saw the lovely woman, who had held the child by the hand, fall to the deck, and saw the man, who, letting go the helm, permitted his boat to luff up under the lee of the headland, spring forward and raise her in his arms, while great torrents of blood gushed out from her breast and ran in crimson currents over her white dress.

They manned several of their fishing canoes and hurried off, in spite of the driving gale, to offer their assistance. They found the man, a young and noble-looking person, kneeling upon the deck and trying to stanch the wound, but all in vain, while the terrified child clung to the corpse and moaned—"Mamma, mamma, speak to Ona!"

It was a pitiful scene. They made their rude, but well-meant offers of aid, and then, for the first time, he seemed to be aware that they were alongside of his boat, for, with the fierceness of a maniac, he half raised her form from the deck, and while his eyes glared and his long hair blew out straight on the gale, he shouted—

"Off! off! She is murdered! she is murdered!"

Then he laid the body down, trimmed his tattered sails, sprung to the helm, and, before another minute had passed, his boat was flying like a gull before the storm, far up the bay amid the thousands of islands which lay between the

seacoast and the "Big Cypress."

A wild mystery to them was in all this. Never had they seen a more beautiful lady. She was tall, raven-haired, lovely in feature, and perfect in form. And costly jewels glittered on her fingers, bracelets of gold clasped her wrists, and also were on her fair round arms above the elbows. By this they deemed her Spanish.

As soon as the boat had luffed in out of sight of the schooner, the latter commenced making signals for a pilot, having shortened sail and hove to as near the shore as she dared. But, had it been possible for them to go out to her, there was not one of those hor-



"BACK, YOU DOG, OR YOU SHALL DIE!"

fugitives how to run into the narrow channel, which, having once entered, would place them in safety for a time. The man at the helm saw them, seemed to understand, and, keeping his craft steady for the shore, soon perceived how to steer to make the entrance. Meantime the shot from the pursuing vessel were plowing up the water all around him. Twice had his small sails been perforated, time after time had the spray from the hissing shot dashed over him, yet no spar was touched—nor he, or the woman, or child hurt, and they now were very close to the shore.

Though they trembled for it, yet the Span-

est fishermen who would have helped to do further wrong to the wretched fugitive, whoever he might be, by aiding to bring the schooner in that she might renew the pursuit.

Gun after gun did the schooner fire, and then, with men at her mast-head, she stood close in as if to reconnoiter the bar, to see if it were passable: and though it was, and for a vessel of larger size than her, for the sea broke in four fathoms water upon it, and the men on shore could by signs have easily guided her across, they would not do it. The sight which they had witnessed had sickened their hearts, and more than one prayer was uttered that night, that the pirate, for such they deemed her, would sink before the morning dawned again.

But, during the night, the tempest slackened, and when morning came the wind had almost died away. Then they saw the low black hull of the schooner rising and falling with the swell of the sea, as she lay at anchor about a mile from shore—her tall spars, with the canvas close-furled, standing in bold outline between them and a cloudless sky. As soon as it was fairly light, a boat was lowered from the vessel, manned with an armed crew. They pulled in upon and over the bar, taking soundings and bearings as they went, and soon found that their schooner could, without difficulty, make the anchorage inside. They returned to her, and, in a short time, she was got under way, run in and brought to an anchor under the same lee where the stranger's boat had luffed up the day before, and within musket shot of the huts of the fishermen.

The latter were much alarmed, but they had nothing to be robbed of except a few thousand pounds of dried fish and their nets and canoes, so they did not fly, but with many prayers to their patron saints, awaited the result of whatever might come.

In a little while an armed boat landed from the vessel, and one who seemed to be her commander sprung to the shore. He was richly dressed, strongly framed, thoroughly armed, and his features would not have been uncomely if passion had not evidently made its throne within his heart. His look was that of one seeking for a victim with the ardor of a Malay, wishing for bloody vengeance for some wrong or fancied injury. His age was probably not more than thirty—his light hair and complexion spoke of Anglo-Saxon blood. With him was a lean, sallow-faced individual, dressed in black, evidently ten or fifteen years older, whose small, snake-like eyes, thin lips, narrow forehead, and close-shaved face made him look, what he surely was, a villain; probably a kind of Judas or Arnold, ready to be one for any one, if money was in question.

The first comer, in an imperious tone, demanded of the fishermen why they did not answer his signal for a pilot. He was replied to by the eldest of the party, a gray-haired Minorcan, one Pablo Canovas, who, among his companions, had the reputation of fearing neither man nor the devil.

"We didn't understand your signal," said he, boldly; "and, if we had, we had no boat which could live in the surf on the bar yesterday!"

"Yet you could signalize the villain who crossed by your directions, when we were sure of his capture!"

"That was not half so bad as your murdering his poor wife!" said the old Spaniard, bitterly.

"His wife? Did he say she was his wife, my dear fellow?" said the individual in black, quickly catching at the expression.

"Ask the insolent dog no questions, Counsellor; I know that she was married to him; that's enough!" said the other impatiently.

"Then Captain Febiger, we must have the child, or all will fall through, unless we can prove its death. My dear fellow, the child was unharmed, was it not?"

"When I know whether I'm talking to the devil or not, I'll answer!" said old Pablo, gruffly.

"Come—I like that!" said he who had been addressed as Captain Febiger, smiling grimly on Pablo. "He is a lawyer, and they're servants to the devil, as a general thing,* but I can answer the question as well as he. The woman only was hurt. I saw that through my spy-glass!"

*A prophetic eye, looking forward to the present day, would have enabled him to put judges and governors in the same category.

"If your heart had been as good as your eyes, she, too, would have been spared!" said Pablo.

"You think so, eh? Well, now, I have a better heart than you think for, or I should cut off both your ears for your insolence; but I like your spirit—it has a spice of the devil in it, like my own. If you'll come aboard the schooner—the "Belladonna" I call her—I'll give you as good a glass of grog as ever met thirsty lips!"

"Keep your grog to drown the recollection of bad deeds in!"

"Well, well, the offer was kindly meant, take it as you will. Do you know anything about the bay up which the fellow went?"

"Nothing!" said Pablo.

"How far does it extend before the main is reached?"

"I don't know!" replied the Spaniard.

"Your men, here?"

"Know no more than I do!" continued Pablo.

"What the devil do you know?" cried Febiger, beginning to get angry and show his natural ferocity again.

"Nothing, when it suits us; a good deal, when we want to!"

The strange captain's hand was on the hilt of his sword, when the gentleman in black urged him to pursue the fugitive and child, who were, probably, fast getting beyond pursuit, urging, for some reason, that the person of the latter must, at all events, be secured, even if the death of the other was not accomplished. Curbing his anger as best he could, the captain of the schooner returned to his boat and went on board of his vessel. In a short time, four boats, full manned and armed put off from the schooner, rowing in the direction which the stranger had taken on the day before.

"The holy saints keep him and the child from their devilish clutches," muttered Pablo, as he saw them go off. "They mean it no good if they do find it, and they seem bent on his life! I'd like to know why. One thing is certain, if ever I can aid him any, I will?"

The old man now set his men to work, for he was the *Padrone* or master of the fishing ranche, though the proprietors lived in Havana, where market was found for the fish when cured.

CHAPTER II.

In a large old stone mansion on that part of Manhattan Island known as Jones' Woods—and now destined to be the Central Park, or expected to be during the present century—or rather in a spacious room thereof, fronting on the East river, bright glimpses of which could be seen through the trees which stood very thick about the building—an elderly man strode to and fro, nervously.

His thin hair was a kind of dirty yellow, as if time had whitened it with soiled hands; his face was wrinkled, but apparently more with anxiety than with age; and his small gray eyes, in their quick searching glances, looked as if they sought either for a place to hide something in, or for some secret spot from which to abstract something. His fingers worked nervously, as he pursued his hurried walk, and he would mutter words that exhibited excitement, though his parchment-colored face showed no more signs of it, than a chunk of river ice covered with saw-dust.

The room, despite his own shabby appearance, was magnificently fitted up. Rich carpets were on the floor, the furniture very costly for that day, and choice paintings hung upon the walls.

The promenade of the person thus partially described, was broken in upon by a colored servant, who said:

"Massa Febiger, dere's a gemlemen down in de 'ception room dat wants to see you. His name am Amasa Queer."

"The horrid old bore! Did you tell him I was in?"

"No, sah, but Antigony, de porter, did!"

"The devil take the infernal nigger! Show the gentleman up; perhaps he wants to see me about stocks—he dabbles in them as far as his paltry thousands will let him go!"

In a few moments Mr. Amasa Queer made his appearance.

Queer in name, his locks surely did not belie his cognomen, nor, judging from that, his

nature. He looked to be about fifty, perhaps five years ahead of that. He wore a snuff-brown coat, brushed very clean—it had been brushed so often that it was thread-bare, but then it was dustless. His vest was elaborate of embroidery, and over it, a large gold guard chain was displayed, and to his fob chain, which dangled from below, a pound or less of old seals, keys, and "charms" were suspended. His head was kept erect by one of those stiff, old-fashioned stocks which aid a trebly starched collar in putting some people to the torture. His "checked" pantaloons were remarkable for their fit. They tightly fitted a very aldermanic abdomen—they tightly fitted a pair of legs which seemed all too slender to support such a ponderous upper-half. He wore gloves—cotton gloves, black at that—and carried an ivory headed cane, which, like himself, was very large at the top and very small below. His air was jaunty as that of a sand-piper on the sea-beach; yet he seemed to try to make it appear a business one.

"Ah, my dear friend Febiger, how do you do? I haven't seen you on 'Change for so long, I began to fear you'd cut us Wall street men altogether; so I thought I'd drop up and see you!" cried Mr. Queer, advancing with a rapid step and an extended hand.

"Delighted to see you, (oh, what a whopper!) take a seat, Mr. Queer. John, some wine! You must feel fatigued with your exercise—sit down, sir!" said Mr. Febiger, as cordially as if the "old bore" had been his brother.

"And how's the son, your heir and hopeful—eh, Mr. Febiger?"

"At sea, sir. He prefers an active life afloat to a lazy one on shore."

"Ah, yes—and your lovely ward—"

"Off on a visit to her southern relations!" said Mr. Febiger, quickly, in a tone that implied a dislike of such questioning, and the color began to flush the parchment of his face also. But Queer did not seem to notice this, for he continued:

"Off south, eh? Why, I didn't know that—"

"United States stocks have gone down again, have they not?" almost thundered Mr. Febiger, who, for some reason or other, didn't like the track Queer was on.

"Yes, yes. Are you a heavy loser? Got much on hand, eh?" replied Queer, rather at a loss to account for the sudden "flashing up" of his old friend.

"More than I want!" replied the latter, testily.

"I'll take 'em off your hands at eighty and a third. Strange stocks! When I first went on 'Change they were up to a hundred and twelve and fifteen! How much have you on hand?"

"About a hundred thousand," said Febiger, as coolly as if he was telling the truth.

"What? The figures rather overtop my limits for the present—for the present, Mr. Febiger; but, when I get in some outstanding matters, I'll call upon you—depend upon it, I'll call upon you. We Wall street men have to lend so much to outsiders, you see—securities good, but yet we never can keep a thousand in hand—it is wanted all the time—and, as long as it brings in cent for cent, why 'tis better to keep it moving!"

"Some wine," said Mr. Febiger, "some old sherry, brought home by my son!"

"Ah, capital!" and Queer in an instant forgot stocks and Wall street as he sipped the amber-colored juice, holding it up to the light occasionally, with the air of a connoisseur.

"Excellent! I have drank wine with Governor Clinton, said to be sixty years old, but twasn't a sample to this. I'll try another glass, if you please. Ah, thank you. It runs like a sound of joy along the channels of an old man's blood, making him feel young again. Ah, friend Febiger, you are a happy dog—a happy dog. Too rich to count your money, a smart, active son, and such a nice niece for a ward! I suppose the young people will make a match of it, eh?"

"Sir!" thundered Febiger, and his face grew black as a storm-cloud—"sir, I never discuss family matters, except with my family!"

"Really, my dear sir, a thousand pardons, I meant no offence—I only thought—I—"

"No matter, Mr. Queer, no matter. It is a point that I am very sensitive on. Your apology is quite sufficient. Take another glass of wine, sir; I see you have spilled yours!" said Mr. Febiger, resuming his self-command.

"So I have—thank you—so I have," said

Queer, extending his glass. "I was as much startled at your sudden anger as I would have been if I'd heard my heaviest debtor had gone by the board; but I was in error. Your health, sir, and a hope that the 'United States' will rise in the market. It's all owing to Nick Biddle, old Jaudon, and foreign speculations that it don't. It's to their interest to keep it down and get it out of market, all into their own hands, to the injury of us smaller dealers, who are honest, if we don't cut so deep into financial matters as they do!"

After another glass of wine, and a few more remarks, Mr. Queer departed, having taken care to keep off forbidden ground after this caution.

"Cursed fool!" muttered Febiger, after he had politely bowed Queer out. "What set him to asking such questions? I believe he was a friend of her father's, come to think of it—yes, he made that an excuse for calling to see her the first time that he ever darkened my door. Well, he has crossed the threshold, and he never will again!"

The gentleman rung the bell violently. The servant appeared.

"John, do you caution Antigonus, and remember yourself, that whenever that man comes here again, I am not at home, whether I am in or not."

"Yes, sah!" and the black withdrew.

Again Mr. Febiger renewed his nervous promenade, seeming to be studying out some project or other, for he occasionally spoke his thoughts aloud. It seemed that there was something in Chancery or in the Orphan's Court which he wished to get at, but obstacles were in the way which he could not remove as easily as he desired. Such, at least, would be inferred from the disjointed sentences which fell from his lips. But we will leave him for the present, and wⁿ our way to the south—dear, flowery sout' land of beauty and love.

CHAPTER III.

Swiftly over the land-locked waters of that lovely bay—rapidly threading the channels that opened between islands clad in Nature's gaudiest hue—the little schooner flew with her tattered sails—a stern, tearless man at the helm, the little child now nestling close to his feet and looking up to him; for it, poor thing, could get no answer from its mother, though oft it had called upon her. Her pale lips were silent now, and the soul-light gone from her dark eyes forever!

The boat sailed on, and within two hours from the time he had so rudely repulsed the kind-hearted fishermen, the stranger was close into a dark range of heavy forest, which he knew must be the main land. The sight of a small smoke, such as would rise from a campfire, induced him to steer for it, and as he neared the land, he saw that a narrow and sluggish creek seemed to enter the bay at that point. Near it, a dozen or more Indians stood, who gazed wonderingly at the boat, for such visits to their forest fastnesses had not been made often, though sometimes Spanish traders, in small piraguas, visited the islands and points along the coast, to barter calicoes, and powder, and lead, for skins, and dried meat, and fish.

The stranger boldly ran his schooner up into the creek, and after running a little way, so that she could not be readily seen from the lake, he luffed her up, lowered his sails, and ran her bow upon the shore, where, grounding, she remained fast and safe as if she had been at anchor.

Then, with folded arms, and his little child by his knees, he stood upon the deck by the side of his dead wife, and waited the approach of the savages, who were slowly advancing from their camp. Of more than ordinary height, with a muscular and well-proportioned figure, richly dressed, and armed with pistols and a heavy poniard in his belt, and a serviceable sword by his side—his eye of blue, bright and flashing, and no sign of fear upon his bearded face—he was one well calculated to strike Indians with a sense of his superiority.

They came on, and soon stood upon a bank within a few feet of him. They looked first at him and the beautiful child; but when they saw the corpse of the lovely woman lying in a pool of blood upon the deck, they uttered exclamations of horror in their own language, and looked upon him in distrust. He saw

this, and his first thought was an explanation, which might dispel the thought that he was guilty of an act so base as to slay a woman.

"Do any of you speak Spanish?" he asked, in that language.

"Yes!" said a tall and haughty warrior, who seemed superior to the rest. "I am Chikika, a war-chief. Who are you?"

"A man—pursued by the murderers of my wife!" he said, pointing to the body on the deck. "And your smoke will soon guide them here—then you may see whether I am a warrior or not."

The chief gave one of his men an order, and in a few moments the fire was extinguished.

"Come to the shore—I would talk with you alone, and hear your story. If your heart is white, we are your friends, and your enemies must not seek you while you are with us, or we will take their scalps," said the chief.

The stranger bade his little child stay with mamma, and at once and fearlessly stepped on shore, and retired apart from the other Indians with Chikika. To have shown any distrust at such a moment, would have ruined his cause. After some ten or fifteen minutes' conversation, the two returned to the boat, and Chikika, addressing his warriors, said:

"Brothers!—the pale face has seen sorrow and been wronged, but his heart is white. His wife sleeps in death before him. She has been murdered by his enemies, and he will keep the hatchet sharp till she is avenged. He wants to dwell with us and be one of us. To live with us and die with us—to raise the little papoose till she looks as her mother did. He is a great Medicine! Our king Micanopee is very sick—the pale-face Medicine can cure him! He is rich. He has powder, and lead, and guns, and knives, and hatchets, and money to buy more with!"

A word of approval went from lip to lip. The chief continued:

"I adopt him for my brother! Will you look upon him as a brother and strike hands as friends?"

An unqualified assent was given by every warrior present.

"It is well. You are my brother, and I name you Arpiaka—the 'White Medicine,'" continued the chief.

The ceremony of adoption into the tribe was to be deferred until the party reached the village of Micanopee, the head chief, but to all intents and purposes the stranger was now adopted, and had those by his side who would fight for him to the last gasp.

Leaving a couple of men to act as sentinels and watch the bay, Chikika gave orders for the other Indians to get into their canoes make fast to the schooner and tow her up the river four or five miles, to a higher country, where they could encamp more safely from observation, and where the poor wife of Arpiaka, for by that name, and that alone, must he be known at present, could be buried. The chief went on board of the little vessel with his adopted brother.

* * * * *

It was sunset when they laid her in a grave which they had dug beneath a tall magnolia—a tree whose broad-extending branches would afford shelter to the birds which came to sing the requiem of her, whose spirit, pure as the spotless flowers which filled the air with fragrance, had fled from earth, and left him alone to whither in his grief. It was a solemn burial. Wrapped in a robe which he said she had worn at her bridal, they laid her gently down, amid sweet branches and many flowers, and with such they covered her, so that no earth should touch her. And then they raised a mound above her, and he, whose grief so deep was tearless, carved a name upon the tree, as he sighed, "Lost, lost forever!" That name was—"IONE."

More costly pall and coffin may have sepulchred a queen—yet never one, I ween, so fitting for the pure and lovely. Many a long train of mourners may have followed a great one of earth to the tomb, but none more sorrowful or respectful than that dusky train of warriors. It was pitiful to see poor little Ona, scarce two years old, look upon them when they laid her mother down amid the flowers, and to hear her ask, "Mamma sleep?" Yes, the sleep that on earth was to know no awakening!

The evening shadows came and drew the veil of night over the bosom of the earth. But the bright-eyed stars looked down through it, and sent their bright glances in amid the

flowers and upon the dancing waters. The Indians withdrew to their camp, and Arpiaka went with them to a sweet arbor which they had framed for him among some wild orange trees. They had covered it with the broad leaves of the palmetto, so that neither dew nor rain could fall on him or Ona, and they had brought soft grasses from the river side and made his carpet and his bed, and over all spread soft skins and blankets of feathers. And they had seen that he loved flowers when he laid them on his dead wife's breast, and flowers they had gathered and twined in with the orange blossoms all around him. He kissed his weary child and laid her down to sleep, and then he left her, for he knew no harm would come to her—left her to go and grieve upon the grave of his heart's idol, whom he could see no more.

CHAPTER IV.

Morning dawned upon the Indian camp. The stars had hid their faces before the glory of the sun, and went to rest while he was abroad. The warriors rose and bathed in the crystal waters, and builded their fires anew for the morning meal. The little child woke in her arbor, for birds were singing overhead and upon every hand, and the scene was strange to her. And her wail was heard, for she found no mamma there to hear her lisp her morning thanks to the Great Preserver, nor was her father by her side to still her new-born terror.

Chikika sought and found his brother. But oh, how changed! No wonder that the red men deemed it a miracle! His hair, a glossy brown, the night before, had changed to a snowy white. Oh, tell me not that tears speak grief—they emblem joy as well. One night of sorrow—one night of recurrence to past joys, lost forever—one night of thought, realizing how great the loss, had left its record on his head for life.

When Ona saw her father, she was frightened, for at first she did not know him. But his voice, bearing kind words of love in through the portals of her spotless heart, told her who he was, and all trembling, she nestled in his bosom, like a dove which fears the hawk.

"My brother must not grieve—his heart must be strong! The spirit of his bride looks down from the happy land, and smiles upon him and his child! Be a man! Let women weep—warriors should not!" said Chikika.

"It is true!" replied Arpiaka. He kissed his child, and thenceforward he smiled, nor let the grief-cloud darken his face, though it lay condensed within his heart.

The morning meal was prepared, more varied and profuse than could have been found in the haunts of civilization, for the waters had yielded oysters, fish, and turtle; the forest its turkeys, curlew, and other game, beside venison; and such hunters were not of the kind to go hungry when earth, air, and water teemed with all which the appetite could crave. And they had bread made from the white flour of the powdered Coomptee,* and fruit—oranges, guavas, bananas, and coo-coa plums. Grapes, too, in rich clusters hung all around. Lemons and limes to acidulate their fish. Salt, fresh-made from the ocean. Peppers, tiny but sharp, all at hand, with which to season their food.

For the Indian, what a paradise was such a land! Why should the pale-face rob him of it, and send him, the son of the sunny south, to freeze on the bleak prairies of the west—why, oh, God of justice, why? Echo only answers—WHY?

But a little after the breakfast had been dispatched, one of the sentinels, or scouts, whom Chikika had left upon the border of the bay, came up the creek in his canoe, and said that four boats of pale faces were upon the water, searching among the islands and along the shore.

"The enemies of my brother—they seek his life?" asked Chikika.

"Yes—the murderers of my wife—they seek my blood—they would rob me of my child!" replied Arpiaka.

"They had better put their hand in the nest of the hooded cobra than seek my brother among the Seminoles!" cried Chikika. "We will go half way to meet them!"

At his word, his warriors instantly resumed their arms. Arpiaka now stepped to his boat,

entered its small cabin, and brought out a splendid double barreled rifle, which he gave to Chikika, and then to each of the other warriors he gave a new rifle, telling them to give their old ones to such of their brothers as had none, when they got back to their great village where Micanopee lay. And to each he gave a sharp and glittering knife. And from a keg he filled their horns with powder, and, giving them lead, bade them hasten to run bullets with which to slay his enemies. And they hastened to do it. Meantime, he loaded a rifle similar to that which he had given to his adopted brother, and prepared for action, if his foes should come upon him. His boat, which contained many stores of value—for he had been in search of a home upon this very shore when pursued by his enemies—was drawn close up under some overhanging bushes, and her masts taken down, so that a boat could pass close by her and yet the crew make no discovery.

The sun was well up when they were ready; in truth, it lacked no more than an hour or two of noon, when, leaving Ona under charge of a faithful sentinel in the arbor, Arpiaka embarked with the rest in canoes, and steered down toward the bay. The utmost silence was observed, for though Chikika offered to send for, and could soon have had, five hundred warriors at hand, Arpiaka would not let him, and their numbers were far inferior to those reported by the scout as being in the bay. It was decided not to show themselves to the whites, but if the latter found the creek and entered it, then to attack them from the banks in ambuscade, where Chikika felt sure that, even with his small force, he could destroy them.

Soon the party landed near the mouth of the creek, and hiding their canoes, made preparations for a reconnoissance. Skulking low among the dwarf palmettoes which lined the pebbly shore, they could see the schooner's boats scouring about from island to island, and sweeping along the main in their vain search after Arpiaka and his child. At times the whites came so near that their shouts and curses could be plainly heard, and several times they landed, but they could find no traces of those for whom they sought; and at last, when the sun began to sink low in the west, and redden, as if flushed and weary with the day's travel, they were seen slowly and sullenly rowing back toward their own vessel.

Chikika, whose blood had been hot for battle, eager to avenge Arpiaka's wrongs, now returned with his band to remain at their camp that night, and to prepare for an early start to Micanopee's village.

And little Ona's cry of joy when she nestled once more upon her father's breast, was clear and glad as the song of a bird hailing the warm breath of spring. She had missed him in his absence.

CHAPTER V.

When the boats of the *Belladonna* returned from their fruitless search, three of them went directly to the vessel, but the one in which the captain and lawyer sat, rowed toward the shore. The sun was just sinking out of sight, and the fishermen, having ceased labor for the day, stood smoking in front of their cabins, while one or two prepared their evening meal.

"Why do you smile, fellow?" asked Febiger fiercely, seeing honest Pablo Canovas standing, with a pleased look, among the rest.

"To see you come back empty-handed—to see that the vultures have sought their prey in vain!" replied the old Spaniard.

"Beware, insolent dog; I am not as easy in my humor as I was this morning!"

"I care not for thy humor—I am not thy slave!"

"No? You may be less than a slave if you do not keep a civil tongue in your head! But I am not here to bandy words with you or any of your gang—but to make you an offer! You all saw the man and child who escaped my pursuit yesterday. To-day I have sought for them in vain—"

"And will to-morrow, next day, next year, forever, I hope!" cried Pablo.

"Silence, dog, or I'll strike your head from your shoulders!" cried Febiger, doubly angered at the words and interruption. Then he continued:

"I will give ten thousand dollars for that child alive—ten thousand dollars in hard, yellow gold, and will add five thousand for him who slays the father—his scalp will be the proof! He probably will come back here after I have gone with my vessel. Some of you know the Señor Rafael de Ribera, of Havana?"

"Yes—he deals with pirates, smugglers, and cut-throats, and *must* be a friend of yours!" said Pablo.

"He will pay the money for the child and scalp if I am not there. You need only give the name of Marcus Febiger, and it will be sufficient!" continued the captain. "Now, my men, there is a chance to earn a small fortune easier than hauling rotten fish ashore!"

"An easier way of earning eternal *damnation!*" cried Pablo, bitterly. "Accursed be the hand which touches blood-money! Accursed be he who would steal a child from its parent! May his own blood be shed and his children die in beggary!"

As the old fisherman said this, his head bared to the evening breeze, and his hands and eyes raised toward heaven, he looked like some venerable prophet invoking the strength of heaven to aid the helpless and the innocent.

"By the hand that made me, you've gone far enough, old man!" shouted the brutal Febiger. "Take that for your reward!" and he raised his heavy cutlas, and with terrific force it crushed down upon the old man's head, half severing the arm which he threw up to defend it.

The fishermen sprung to their cabins for what arms they had, but Febiger, backed by his armed crew, retreated in safety to the boat, and soon was beyond the reach of the enraged companions of poor Pablo. The latter was carried to his cabin, and it was found, fearfully wounded as he was, that life was still in him though he who struck the blow, as well as those who saw it done, believed him to be slain outright. He so far recovered as to give directions how to staunch the bleeding, for he had served in the armies of *Espana vieja*, and knew considerable of surgery.

As soon as the moon rose, the schooner was got under way and stood out to sea, followed by the curses of the honest fishermen, whose quiet had been thus unwarrantably broken in upon. They had, with one exception, listened with scorn to the offers of Febiger, and would have begged or starved before they would have earned money by such a deed.

One exception. There was a *Judas* in the company of Jesus—an *Arnold* among the heroes of our Revolution, and in that little band of fishermen there was one *Pedro Picaro*, who, for money, would have sold a father to death, or a sister to shame, though he were so smooth a face and had so soft a tongue, that none could know him except such as pierced, with discriminating eyes, the outer shell which hid his true nature from superficial observation.

Pedro Picaro had heard the offer, and recorded it in his heart—on its black surface, in crimson letters, it was writ, and he determined to earn that money if he could. He was young, strong, had an assassin's courage, was fertile to invent, and prompt to execute. He was not much liked by his comrades, for they had found him treacherous and insincere, but he was the most useful hand about the ranche—equally good at mending a broken net or a leaky canoe, and withal a capital hunter, as their larder, well stored with the flesh of wild hogs, wild cattle, venison, turkeys, etc., bore witness to. It is singular, yet it is a fact, that pork or meat of any kind is a luxury to fishermen, who, though they have the choicest of the finny tribe before them, seldom touch fish when they have other food.

But we will leave the wounded Pablo to the care of his companions, hoping that he may recover—and we will leave Pedro Picaro to concoct his plans of villainy, while we go somewhere else in search of matters of interest.

CHAPTER VI.

On the next morning their wardrobes, much improved by some gaudy cloths and ornaments which Arpiaka had given them, the Indians prepared to return to the village of their head chief, or king, Micanopee, who was lying so sick that it was thought no conjuration could save him, or medicine, culled from the forest, give relief. As on the day before, the canoes united in a string, and took Arpiaka's

little schooner in tow, she being sharp and light of draught, sliding along very easily after their strong and well-plied paddles. Chikika, who, with a delicacy which did him honor, had caused some of his men to remove the blood stains from the schooner's deck, remained on board with Arpiaka.

For many miles they kept steadily on, the creek at times spreading out in large lagoons, then narrowing between high banks, and leaving them bare space to pass—now crooking and forking off into different channels, which would have utterly confused a stranger—then, again, so shortly turning to the right or left, that any one twenty feet from the turn would believe he had got to the end of the creek, and feel inclined to go back if he were unacquainted; for the water was so still and sluggish, that its course could scarcely be observed. Up this creek, only pausing once, about noonday, to take a little food, they steadily paddled, until almost night, when, after passing through a dense and gloomy swamp of cypress, they suddenly emerged into a small, but very lovely crescent-shaped lake, and then Arpiaka saw what might well have been termed an Indian city, rather than a village. The whole opposite bank of the half-moon-shaped lake was covered with neat houses, made of stripped poles, and thatched with palmetto; and in their airy lightness, or light airiness, admirably adapted to that delicious climate, where no frost comes to blight the bud or wilt the flower.

To the right and left, far as the eye could reach, were fields in which grew corn, melons, tobacco, and fruits of every kind; and cattle and horses, guarded by small boys, could be seen grazing in amongst them.

As the boats approached the shore, hundreds of the bright-skinned inhabitants, of all ages and both sexes, gathered down upon the beach; for Chikika, proud of his adopted brother and his wealth, had raised the masts of the schooner before she entered the lake, and Arpiaka, to please him, had decked her out with flags, of which he had several on board. And the more to please him, he had mounted a small brass swivel, which was fired, with a louder report probably than had ever echoed over those waters before.

The schooner soon was moored to the land, and Chikika, leaving a guard upon the schooner to keep the curious off, led his pale-faced brother on shore, and, amid the silent and wondering multitude, took him to his own lodge, which was next in size and elegance to that of the sick king, and had several apartments, in which were found his wives, five in number, one of whom was of pure Spanish blood. She was the mother of his eldest boy and his favorite, and it was through her that he had become so proficient in the Spanish language. She had met him at a fishing *ranch*, loved him, and fled to the forest, and she did not regret her choice, for he was very kind to her.

To this woman *Maraquita*, Arpiaka confided his little one for a time, while he and Chikika should visit the sick king, who was reported, by his attendants and the sub-chiefs, to be much worse, and wildly raving. Arpiaka first sent Chikika back to the schooner for his well-stocked medicine chest, from which he selected several articles which he thought might be useful, for he was a man of education, and a finished chemist, and well acquainted with the nature and use of medicine and its effects.

Before Arpiaka reached the grand lodge of the king with the chief, they could hear, even at some distance, his wild ravings, which were none lessened by the drumming of the chief conjurer or physician, who sat before the lodge, beating his drum to drive off the Evil Spirit which afflicted his master. A word from Arpiaka to Chikika and the infernal din was stopped.

They passed in to the inner apartment, which had been closed up with mats, and was as hot as an oven, and there found the old chief literally raving like a maniac, if, indeed, he was not one. He was held down by four stout warriors, else he would have ran raving from his lodge.

As Arpiaka, with his large, glistening eyes fixed upon him, advanced toward the invalid, his pale face, long white hair, and tall figure giving him an air of majestic dignity, the king suddenly ceased his ravings, and the limbs which, with straining muscles, had striven to free themselves from the grasp of the strong men, sunk peacefully down upon the couch. Arpiaka never let his gaze leave the eye of

the sick man; but he took hold of one of his hands, and with his right hand commenced gently soothing the throbbing nerves of the sick man's head. Then he spoke to Chikika, and bade him tear away the close matting from the sides of the lodge, and to let the cool air come in upon the patient, through the network of poles and vines outside. This was done; but he kept the hand of his patient, never moved his gaze, and continued passing his hand gently over his brow and temples. For a time, though without speaking, the sick king returned his gaze; but in a little while his eyes began to droop, and soon he slept as quiet as a babe upon its mother's bosom.

"He comes from the Great Spirit, this medicine-man," murmured the warriors who had seen this done; "he can bring the dead to life!"

Arpiaka now took a little phial from his pocket, and poured it in a cup of water.

"When he awakes, let Micanopee drink this, and to-morrow he will be well! Make no noise to disturb his slumber, and let the free air come to him!" said he.

The warrior attendants, who looked upon him almost as a god, promised obedience, and with a still, but proud step, Arpiaka departed; for he felt that already he had done a thing which would give him a monarch's power among that people, although he had only availed himself of Mesmer's soothing art, which, with his powerful mental and physical organization, and strong will, he was easily enabled to do.

He now returned with the wondering, but proud Chikika, to his lodge, where a supper, great in quantity and rich in quality, awaited them; for the chief's Spanish wife had trained the others, and they were excellent cooks. A room was prepared for Arpiaka in the chief's lodge that night; on the morrow a lodge of grand proportions was to be built for his separate use.

The morrow came, bright and cloudless. A gentle breeze dipped its lips in the cool lake, and then came to kiss the brows of the villagers, ere it passed away amid the magnolias, the oaks, and the pines beyond. At an early hour Arpiaka and Chikika went to visit the king, and hundreds gathered in silence near; for they had heard that the pale face had promised the cure of their loved chief.

The king had woken but once since Arpiaka had left, and then they had given him the prescribed medicine, and he had sunk back to slumber again. He now slept; and when Arpiaka felt his pulse, he found it calm and healthful, but weak, and both his hands and brow moist, and free from fever. He therefore sent Chikika to his boat for a bottle of old wine: and after pouring out a cup of this, and adding a tonic powder he woke the king, and placed it to his lips. The latter, without a question, drank it off, and it seemed almost in an instant to throw new life into his limbs, long weakened and unnerved by sickness. He arose, unaided, to a sitting position, and looking at his strange physician in wonder, asked who and what he was.

Chikika now told Micanopee all of Arpiaka's story, doubtless garnishing it well from his own fancy, and related to the king what the pale-face had done for him the night before. The king, who spoke good English—for he had been much with the whites, and had visited the city of Washington several times to try—vain thought!—to get justice for wrongs done to his tribe, addressed Arpiaka, and said:

"You are a great man, and the Spirit of Good is in you! Your heart is white. You are a brother to Chikika, but you are a son to me. You have saved my life. I was dead, but you have called me back from the spirit world! I will reward you. Twelve of my slaves are yours, to make your fields and take care of the horses and cattle which I will give you. You shall stay with us, and be our 'Medicine,' and give me sense to govern my people, for you know all things. The Great Spirit speaks through your tongue, and works through your hands. I am strong; let me go out with you, and show my people what you have done!"

The king, through whose veins the old wine was now coursing, leaned on Arpiaka's arm, and walked with a firm step out from his lodge, where he could be seen by the assembled thousands of his subjects.

Loud and long was the shout which greeted his appearance, and louder and longer still one which followed when, after a hush, he raised his voice, and cried—

"My children, behold my savior! I adopt him as my son—love and honor him as such!" And the king, by advice of Arpiaka, returned to his lodge, where the latter prescribed his diet for the day, so ordering that the return of strength should be gradual and permanent. And Micanopee gave orders for the immediate erection of a lodge, even more spacious than his own, for Arpiaka, bidding workmen to obey every order of the latter in its arrangements. And he gave other orders to Chikika regarding slaves, cattle, horses, fields, etc., which need not be mentioned here. Every preparation was to be hurried, for the formal ceremony of adopting the "Great Medicine" into the tribe. But of that another chapter will speak; this one must close to give us a chance to look elsewhere.

CHAPTER VII

In the back room of a large stone house on the *Calle Obra-de-pia*, in Havana, sat about as villainous a man, in looks, as one could well hatch up in his imagination, if he wanted to picture a scoundrel of the darkest dye, who, without an attribute of common humanity, could be engaged in any phase of crime known to men. He was a Spaniard, evidently, but seemed to have some negro blood in his veins, for his lips were thick, his hair crispy, and his eyes red and fiery. A deep scar, extending from the left eye-brow across the bridge of his nose, down to his jaw-bone, gave his otherwise hideous face an ugly aspect, and seemed a record of some fray, where his life had run a narrow risk. Diamonds glittered on his finger and in his shirt-bosom, and chains and jewelry were hung about him with vulgar profusion. He was seated before a huge iron closet, which was so set in the wall that its door, when closed, seemed to be a part of the ceiling. Upon strong shelves in this closet, piles of doubloons could be seen, and bags of gold and silver lay heaped up on the floor. Books of account, too, were stowed there, and one of these he was examining at the time I introduce him.

"Hang these government sharks, I say!" he muttered. "I have paid the Governor-General three thousand doubloons for landing only six cargoes of negroes! By San Diego, it eats too big a hole in my profits. I'll try a ran or two without a permit, and see if the ruk won't pay!"

The sound of a distant bell caused the Spaniard to throw his book quickly into the closet, and to shove the door to. It closed with a spring, and no one could see a sign that a door was there when he turned from it.

"It is the warning that some one comes!" he muttered—"who can it be? I expected no visitor to-night—but we'll soon see!"

And, lighting a cigar, he cast himself down, lazily, upon a lounge, as if he had been taking a siesta.

Directly, a servant entered and announced "the Senor, El Captano Febiger," and close upon his heels followed the commander of the "Belladonna."

"Ah, friend Ribera!" he cried. "have I caught you napping for once?"

"Not so fast," said Don Rafael de Ribera, rising, and offering his coarse, but glittering hand, "I was only resting to let my dinner digest! But what's the news—where are you from—are you in your saucy clipper yet?"

"Yes," replied the other taking a seat, and lighting a cigar from that extended by Ribera. "I've been on a wild-goose chase—but on nothing that would pay you or interest you to know! In it, for the first time in my life, when I undertook a thing, I have failed! But my special business with you to-night, is to direct, that if a man should at any time bring you a little girl for me, that you take her, and guard her as you would a casket of diamonds, until I can hear from you, and 'me for her. Pay the man that brings her ten thousand dollars, and if with her, he brings a human scalp of long, brown hair, give him five thousand more and then, if he never should leave the city with his money and my secret, I shall not be sorry—you understand!"

"Perfectly!" said Ribera; "it shall be attended to! When did you see your father?"

"For a few moments only, about three weeks ago!" replied Febiger. "I had just come in with a small cargo, without a manifest, when I got news that started me off in a hurry. I nearly accomplished my object, but failed. Remember, you are to keep the strict

est guard over the child, if she is brought. A fortune of two millions of dollars, and more, may be hers if she gets into other hands!"

"You can trust me, Captain Febiger. At this moment I have over a million of dollars of your father's invested, and entirely under my control, and he has no fears of me!"

"I am aware of that, Ribera; I did not doubt you, but only spoke by way of caution. But I'm as thirsty as a Cape Cod girl after a long sermon—got anything to wet down with, handy?"

"Certainly, what shall it be—wine, or something heavier?"

"Heavier, by all means! Wine will do for women and milk-sops—give brandy to me!"

"Touch that bell on the table, if you please!" Febiger did so, and a servant appeared, to whom the necessary orders were given.

"I've got a live curiosity aboard the *Bella-donna*, Ribera!" continued the American.

"Ah, what is it, a baboon or an alligator?"

"What a hand you are at guessing, Ribera! You beat the Yankee's—it's a cross between them, as near as I can make out, with a little mixture of the shark—it's a *New York lawyer!*"

"The devil!"

"No, not the devil, but one of his adjutants."

"How came he on board of your vessel?"

"He is in my father's employ, and as he thought some compromise might possibly be made, if I overhauled the parties after whom I was sent, the fellow was put aboard to be ready to draw up the papers! He's as full of law as a rotten biscuit is of worms!"

The brandy came in just in season to wash down that comparison. After taking a couple of stiff horns, Febiger arose to go.

"When do you leave?" asked Ribera.

"This very night—a few doubloons have done the business for me with the captain of the port, and I suppose there will be a cargo of prime cigars aboard, when I get back, which pay no export duty, and I'm sure they'll get into New York free!"

"Ah, captain, you're a hard nut to crack!"

"And them that crack me will get bitter meat for their pains!" said the young captain, and then shaking hands with Ribera, he bade him adieu.

"Remember me to your father," cried the latter, as Febiger departed—"tell him I'll take care of every vessel that he fits out for the Coast, if he posts me in time. The last was a sickly season here, and *Guinea* pigs are wanted on the plantations, and will fetch a good, round price!"

"Aye, aye!" cried Febiger, and he was gone.

CHAPTER VIII.

The sun rose, and not a cloud lay in its pathway athwart the sky, on the morning of the day when Arpiaka was to be formally adopted into the tribe among whom he had chosen a home. He was installed in his new house, which, fitted with furniture, books, musical instruments, arms, etc., brought from his little schooner, was very unique, yet Christian and comfortable, if the second term is admissible. With servants, too, who, having runaway from Georgia and Alabama, had been put to easier labor by Micanopee, and who understood his wants, as well as his orders. Arpiaka had every attention that he could desire. Chikika had permitted one of his own daughters, who spoke Spanish well, to become a nurse for little Ona, who seemed already, in the care which was bestowed upon her, to forget the dear mamma, who slept beneath the towering magnolia.

Arpiaka rose early, and bade his slaves hasten to prepare breakfast, for he expected Chikika to assist him in dressing and painting, for he was now to discard the dress which he had worn, and dress as his brothers did.

Chikika came early, and his countenance indicated that there was some trouble in his breast. Arpiaka noticed this, and inquired why a cloud had settled upon his brother's face.

"I am sad, for a bird has whispered evil tidings to me!" said the chief. "My brother, who is very dear to me, has an enemy among my people, and one who is very powerful!"

"Who is he, and what have I done to make an enemy?" asked Arpiaka.

"It is Tustenugle Hadjo. He was the king's conjuror and sense-bearer until you came, and he is angry that you, by your power and good, have supplanted him. He has

power, because the people believe he is a great conjuror!"

"Let not my brother grieve," said Arpiaka; "this day I will prove Tustenugge a fool before all the people, and he will hide his head and go away!"

"Then Chikika's heart will rejoice," said the chieftain, and the cloud on his face vanished, for he believed that the lips of his brother could utter no falsehood.

The sun had traveled one-third of its day's journey; and proud was the display on the grand parade, or "ball-ground," in the centre of Micanopee's village. Every warrior, and all the women and children, were dressed in the gayest attire which they could muster. The warriors were painted, their scalp-locks trimmed, and their weapons in hand, as if they were about to go to battle. Upon a throne, or platform, raised near his lodge, sat Micanopee, a lofty coronet of many-colored feathers upon his head, and a magnificent mantle of flaming feathers, of a rich scarlet hue, upon his form. Around him clustered his sub-chiefs and warriors, who, by their deeds in battle, had won a right to stand next to their sovereign.

At a sign from Micanopee, the drums of a band of warriors commenced beating a slow and monotonous march; and at the same moment, accompanied by Chikika, Arpiaka stepped proudly forth from his lodge.

Oh, how much more noble he looked in the dress of the forest than he had done in the European garb! His well-turned limbs, his tall, straight figure, so well developed, now had full play. The fringed hunting shirt, descending to the knee, lay easy across his swelling breast, and the close-fitting moccasin gave a light spring to his step, which he never had felt before. Above his lofty brow a coronet of rich purple feathers rose, contrasting well with his snow-white hair. His face had been darkened, and it also made a deep contrast. His dress was rich, and over it he wore an embroidered belt, in which a bright hilted bowie-knife, and a large and handsomely mounted pistol, were placed. He also carried a rifle, twin to that which Chikika so proudly carried by his side.

As the two reached the centre of the square, without saying a word, Chikika turned and left Arpiaka, and at the same moment a band of painted warriors bounded forth, uttering hideous yells, firing their guns over his head, and then they closed in a circle about him, shaking their glittering knives and hatchets in his face, and menacing him with instant destruction.

With a cool, undaunted air, he rested the butt of his rifle on the ground, and folding his arms upon his breast, regarded their threatening gestures with a smile. They redoubled their efforts to terrify him, but it was in vain, and at last they retired. Arpiaka was now about to advance, when a hideous looking creature bounded toward him. It had on horns and great glaring eyes, and from its red mouth smoke and sparks of fire came forth. Its body was scaled like an alligator, and long claws were on its four feet. It was a hideous looking monster, indeed! It dashed upon Arpiaka, and rearing up, with its paws on his breast, it puffed the fire and smoke directly in his face.

With a strong and well-directed buffet, Arpiaka not only knocked the monster down, but knocked the false head entirely off, revealing the face of the conjuror Tustenugge Hadjo, now convulsed with pain and rage.

"Your life shall pay for this, accursed pale face!" muttered the discomfitted conjuror, picking up his false head, which, with its fire apparatus, lay smoking on the ground, and hastily retreating to his lodge, while the welkin rung with shouts of applause for Arpiaka. He had borne his tests well.

Chikika now rejoined him, and led him to the throne of Micanopee. The old chief arose and said:

"Arpiaka, son of my old age, thy home is in my bosom! We adopt you as a son and a brother. Your enemies are our enemies—your friends are our friends! From among our maidens choose your wives; from all that we have take what you want. You are now a Seminole, and may the Great Spirit bless you!"

He descended and threw a richly-worked belt over the neck and shoulder of his adopted son, and the ceremony was over.

Arpiaka thanked him, and then requested

permission to show some conjurations or magic deeds, which would prove his wisdom and power. To this the king gladly consented, and the mass crowded as close to the throne as possible.

One of Arpiaka's negroes now advanced with a salver, upon which stood a plain, black bottle and a crystal goblet.

"Let Tustenugge Hadjo, the great 'conjuror,' be sent for. I would test his power and his honesty," said Arpiaka.

It was done, and, trembling with rage, Tustenugge came.

"Will the king be pleased to taste my wine?" asked Arpiaka, and he poured out a full goblet of wine, clear as amber, and rich as ever was pressed from the grape.

"It is delicious," said Micanopee, and his eyes sparkled as he drained the glass, for he felt it tingle through every vein.

"Let Tustenugge drink his royal master's health!" said Arpiaka, refilling the goblet.

Not clear, but dark as blood came forth the draught, and the conjuror took but one swallow, when, spitting it out with disgust, he cried: "You have given me gall to drink!"

"No!" cried Arpiaka, in a tone of thunder; "your heart is black, and your lips have turned the wine to gall! It was from the same bottle from which I served the king. Another glass, slave!"

Dashing the first goblet to pieces, the true magician filled another with the same sparkling wine which had so pleased the king, then passed it to Chikika and the other warriors. It went from lip to lip until it was drained.

"Now," cried he, "once more I will test the heart of Tustenugge Hadjo. I pour out wine to him; if it turns to gall, the Great Spirit knows why 'tis done!"

He raised the same bottle and filled the glass, then handed it to Micanopee to taste.

"It is gall!—his heart is black!" said the king, and he handed the goblet to his warriors. They tasted the bitter draught, and their looks were dark toward the now mystified and frightened conjuror, who tried to get away from his position.

"Let the conjuror stay! He is a man—so am I. Let him see if he can kill me, as he has vowed to do in his own lodge, among his women!" cried Arpiaka.

The conjuror started and trembled yet the more, for he had indeed so threatened, but he deemed that no one knew it but his women, whom he had cautioned not to speak.

"See here!" continued Arpiaka—"here is my pistol—it is not loaded—there is powder and ball; load it, and then, taking aim at my heart, standing from me only one spear's length, fire! If you kill me, it is well—I will be in your way no longer; if you do not, then cease to be my enemy!"

Chikika and Micanopee both remonstrated, for they thought that he would lose his life. But Arpiaka told them that the Great Spirit would preserve him from all harm, and handed Tustenugge the pistol and powder. Then marking the ball, and showing it to the king and his warriors, he handed it to the eager conjuror, who seemed to feel certain now of removing his rival.

When the pistol was loaded, Arpiaka tore open the front of his hunting shirt, and bidding the conjuror take good aim, told him to fire. While the crowd kept death-like silence, and those around the throne hardly drew a breath, the conjuror raised the deadly weapon—raised it slowly till his aim was on that naked breast, then fired!

Arpiaka did not move. A smile was on his face, and he raised his hand and took the marked bullet from between his white teeth, and handed it to the king, remarking, as he did so, that the conjuror was "a bad marksman—he shot too high!"

With a howl of baffled rage and fear, Tustenugge Hadjo fled away, not only from the crowd, but from the village, while the wondering king and the warriors regarded Arpiaka with an awe and reverence, such as they would have rendered to a god. And yet he had only practiced two very common tricks in the art of legerdemain, many more of which he was acquainted with, and stood ready to use if necessity required it.

From that time on, the Great Medicine had enough to do. All the sick prayed for his aid, and as he was really skillful, and they had

faith, which is the physician's best aid, many and wonderful were the cures which he effected. Not half as much power did the king possess as he, for the people believed that he could not die, and they feared as well as loved him. In everything the king asked his counsel, and no wish of his was disregarded. One thing the king wondered at: though the loveliest maidens in the tribe would have given half their lives to become his wives, he would not marry.

"The breast whereon *Ione* has pillow'd her head, can never support another," said he, one day, when Chikika offered him his own daughter, the nurse of Ona, a lovely girl of seven teen.

Of one thing Arpiaka was glad. He had frightened away the dark and subtle conjuror—for Tustenugge had never been seen since the day he fled away from the village. It was thought that he had gone to the creeks in the north, or the wandering Mickasookies, who hung about the swamps to the west of Onithlacoochee. Wherever he was, Arpiaka felt certain that the terror infused by his magic experiments was with him, and that he would be chary how he attempted his life.

There is nothing which so affects the courage of an Indian as a belief that you possess a supernatural power. They are spiritual believers in the fullest sense, and have been for ages—long before such a thing was thought of in civilized circles

CHAPTER IX.

"My dear friend Marcus—or Captain Febige I should say—how do you do? I'm dreadfully glad to see you; as glad as if one of my debtors had anticipated date in the payment of a note. Come into the Tontine and test the brandy!" cried our old acquaintance, Amasa Queer, as he met the young captain of the Belladonna in Wall street, just eight days after the interview which the latter had with Riberia in Havana.

"How are you, Mr. Queer? Up to your eyes in stocks, I suppose, as usual?" replied Febiger, accepting the invitation to the Tontine tacitly, by turning his steps toward that time-honored spiritual resort.

"Touching them slightly, slightly!" said Mr. Queer, in a tone meant to imply that he was dealing very heavily. "What is the news, my dear boy—just in, eh?"

"Yes, sir, just arrived from a trip to the southward!"

"Ah, yes; I saw your father the other day, and he said you was at sea! What will it be, captain?"

They had now arrived at the bar.

"Brandy!" said Febiger. "I never drink anything stronger!"

"Ha—ha, I shouldn't think you could, especially as they keep nothing here but 'fourth proof,' right out of the Custom House!"

"It is tolerable!" said the young captain, filling a glass two-thirds full, and "tossing it off" as if it had been water.

Mr. Queer contented himself with a glass of Hudson ale; this he softened with a bite of cracker and cheese, but keeping his tongue going whenever his jaws were unoccupied—a common custom of his everywhere, and on all occasions.

"I had quite a joke with your father the other day; ha, ha, quite a joke, friend Marcus!"

"Indeed; what was it?" asked Febiger, proceeding to light a cigar.

"Well, you see, I knew your pretty cousin, *Ione*, slightly. I knew her poor father well, went to school with him, and when he brought his pretty wife home from Spain, I was one of the first to give him joy! Well, you see, I knew pretty much about his affairs when he and his wife died, and I was a' thinking what a snug little fortune your cousin had; and as you was the only heir to your father's wealth—and that's more than he could count in a week—what a good thing 'twould be for you two to hitch on matrimonially and double the heap."

Good joke, eh? Why, what on earth is the matter with you, Captain; are you sick? You are pale as that marble there!"

"No, sir; no!" said Febiger, controlling with difficulty the fearful passion which was rising in his bosom, and calling for another glass of brandy.

"So, Mr. Amasa Queer," said he, more calm, after he had swallowed the brandy, "you said all this to my father?"

"That, or something to that effect!" replied Queer.

"How did he take it, Mr. Queer?"

"Why, would you believe it, old friends as we've been, meeting on 'change more or less for twenty or thirty years back, he got as mad as a hornet! But I know you wouldn't; an old man's jokes don't mean anything, you know!"

"Do you know what I should have done if I had been at home, Mr. Queer?" asked Febiger, coolly.

"No, my dear sir; pray, what would you have done—cracked a fresh bottle of old wine, eh, my lad?"

"No, sir! I would have told you that you was an impudent old puppy, and made one of the niggers kick you out of doors!" said Febiger, and he laid a dollar down on the counter to pay for the liquor, and walked off, leaving Mr. Queer in a state of stupefied amazement.

"Well, what the deuce is the matter—acts just as bad as his father did, when I spoke of her. There must be something wrong, but I can't see into it. But I will; may I never buy another note, if I don't! Here, barkeeper, I'll take the rest of the change for that dollar; the young man is a friend of mine, went off in a hurry, and forgot it. I'll return it to him!"

The barkeeper, who, attending to some other gentlemen, had not heard the words used by Febiger, handed Queer the money without hesitation.

"Well, I've lost nothing and made something by the operation, and that's more than I ever did out of a Febiger before!" muttered Queer, as he pocketed the change and walked off. "Hang me," he continued, "if I can see what sets them afire so quick, if I bring in poor Ione's name. Maybe they've quarreled with her, and that's why she's gone to see her 'southern relations.' Who they are is another mystery, for I never heard her father tell about any; and he wouldn't keep a secret from me, I know. Well, one thing is certain, old Febiger is a hog, and his son is a pig; that's as sure as I'm an honest man! The fellow would order me—me, Amasa Queer, broker, etc., etc., and a gentleman to boot, out of his house; have his blacks kick me out! Whew! I'd like to see him do it. I'd like to see him do it!"

And Mr. Queer walked up Wall-street looking as if he owned half of it.

CHAPTER X.

In the same room where we first saw him, at the stone mansion near the East river, sat Mr. Febiger the elder. He was seated near the window, and before him on a chair was a small brass-bound box, or portable desk. From this he had taken a paper, which he was reading, and the perusal of which seemed to affect him considerably, for, as he read it line by line, he made his comments upon it.

"I wish it was not registered!" he muttered, "then alteration would be easy, and I could bring the whole property under my control!"

He was interrupted in his cogitations by the entrance of a servant.

"What now, John—why do you disturb me, when I have given orders to be left alone?"

"Beg pardon, sah, but dat Massa Blacking, de lawyer, dat went away wid Massa Marcus, is down stairs, and say he must see you!"

"Ah, has he returned? Send him up at once!"

"Yes, sah!"

The servant retired, and in a minute or two the "gentleman in black," whose acquaintance we have already made, as connected with the "Belladonna" in her late cruise, entered the room, his hat in hand, bowing obsequiously as he advanced, with a sickly, cringing smile on his sallow face.

"Well, Mr. Blacking, what news? Did my son overtake the fugitives?"

"Nearly, sir—nearly!" replied the counselor.

"Nearly—if nearly, why not *quite*? Has your expedition resulted in nothing?"

"Rather more, sir, rather more—your niece and ward is dead!"

"And where is her child?" said Mr. Febiger, not evincing the slightest emotion on receiving the news.

"Escaped with its father, and gone beyond our reach."

"Fire and furies! We are just as bad off as when the mother lived. By this will, if she marries, her child or children succeed to the

property. Blacking, you're a fool—a scoundrel, sir! I send you to do work, and you only half do it! Didn't I pick you up out of the gutter, and make a man of you? The only case you'd ever had, when I found you, was for a pig thief—you got him off by trickery, and took half the stolen pigs for your fee! Is not that so? Why are you so unfaithful to your benefactor—to me, sir, to me!"

"Sir—sir—you do me injustice. Hear me first, then condemn me! I was not in command of the expedition—your son was, and he used all diligence, and had it not been for a violent storm, and extraordinary good luck on the part of the fugitives, we should have secured them, and effected your object!"

"My niece is dead, you say—how did she die?"

"She was killed by a grape shot, when we were trying to cripple their boat, sir!"

"Why, in the name of Satan didn't you kill father and child, and bring proof that they were dead—then, as next of kin, all of this property would be mine!"

"Fortune favored them; they had crossed a bar which we could not cross, and, getting behind a point of land, escaped up into the country. We followed and searched, but in vain!"

Mr. Febiger paced to and fro, angrily, for a few moments, and then pausing abruptly, asked:

"Where is my son?"

"He went to enter his vessel at the Custom House."

"Did he bring home any cargo?"

"Yes, sir, a few hogsheads of sugar and molasses on his manifest, and five hundred thousand cigars that were *not* there."

"From the Habana?"

"Yes, sir; but here he comes, and can make his own report!"

"Very well, Blacking, you can retire to your room—I shall want you by-and-bye. When I do, I will send for you!"

The lawyer, or slave—either term would be applicable to him, it would seem—bowed in meek humility, and retired, as the younger Febiger entered. The latter carelessly threw himself down on a sofa, while his father, who remained standing, said:

"Well, you've made a failure, Master Marcus!"

"Yes, partially so, father!" replied the junior, coolly taking a match and cigar from his pocket, and lighting the latter.

"No excuse to give, or explanation to make, sir?"

"No, sir—that loon Blacking, has probably told you all that I could. As to excuses, you know I never make any. I do all that I can in a matter, and if I fail, it is for no want of exertion on my part."

"I believe you, boy; and in this case you are as deeply interested as I am, for when I die all that I have will be yours. Do you think the child can ever be recovered, so that we can get her in our power?"

"I hope so, father. I have bid high for her and arranged matters so that Ribera will get her, if possible, and let us know when it is done. If she is not heard from soon, I will fit up an expedition and scour the country where her father has found refuge, as I presume, among some of the Indian tribes."

"That is well—and you saw Ribera?"

"I did. He wants you to fit out plenty of vessels for the 'coast,' and to consign them to him. Last year was a scorcher on niggers—they're scarce, and will pay well now!"

"Aye, aye! That Ribera is a prince in his line. He has made a great deal of money for me."

"And for himself, too, off of your capital, father."

"Doubtless; he'd be a fool if he did not! Are your cigars landed?"

"To be sure, before I came into the upper bay. I've been too long in the free trade to run any foolish risks when a few extra dollars will hire lighters!"

"Well, retire to your room, or where you please, till supper time, my son; I wish to see you then—now I am busy over some papers."

Marcus retired, and so will we, reader, for you observe that the old gentleman is desirous of being alone with his secrets.

Pedro Picaro was hunting on Sanabel, an island which extends for some miles along the coast to the east of Boca Grande, and nearly approaches the main land, at Punta Rassa from which it is only separated by the river Caloosa Hatchie, famed as the scene of the massacre of Harney's command in 1839.*

At a very early date of the settlement of Florida, somewhere between 1511 and 1520, a colony of Spaniards settled there, but the warlike Uchees and Seminoles—tribes afterward so blended, that the name of the Uchees passed away and became almost forgotten—drove them away with great loss on the side of the Spaniards, the remnant of whom fled, leaving their stock behind them. Thus the island, which is large and thickly wooded, though interspersed with small and very rich savanas or prairies, became stocked with large numbers of wild horses, cattle and hogs, especially the latter, which, like the lower class of mankind, are famous for breeding.

The cattle and horses soon were killed and taken by the Indians, but, like the Hebrews, the Indians are averse to pork when they can get anything else to eat, and the hogs grew and multiplied, and still exist in large numbers on the island, as the writer can testify, for he was once treed by a gang of them, which, led on by a savage old boar, gave him no time to reload his rifle, after he had floored one of their number, but came at him, a regular army of *Tusk-anians*.

Pedro Picaro was hunting on this island a few weeks after Pablo Canovas had received that terrible cut from the merciless hand of Marcus Febiger. He had fastened his canoe in a small cove, bordered on either side by dense mangroves, and had advanced up along the edge of a narrow savana, or strip of grassland, toward the centre of the island, until he reached a knoll or mound from which his eye had a wide scope of vision, extending over that prairie and two or three other similar openings. From this he could see small herds of deer feeding in different directions, and also, by the moving of the tall grass, knew that there were many hogs in the range, but he could not see them.

Carefully repriming his gun, he sat down and finished his cigar; then selecting the game of deer nearest to windward of him, he commenced moving carefully toward it, keeping low down in the grass so as not to be seen by the timid animals in his approach. He crept on as easily and noiselessly as an Indian, and soon being within fair gun-shot, he selected a large fat buck for his aim and fired. The animal bounded high in the air, then fell headlong to the earth. He had taken his last leap. Pedro was about to rush up and cut the animal's throat, when a loud and hoarse grunt broke upon his ear, and an immense boar rose from a mud-slosh, where it had been wallowing, within four or five paces of him—its red eyes glaring maliciously upon him, and its bristles rising in evidence of anger upon its back. Pedro commenced reloading his gun, keeping his eye upon the brute, whose tusks, full six inches long, looked as if they would rip open an alligator, not to speak of a thin-skinned Spaniard. But the porcine warrior was not inclined to give Pedro a chance to claim superiority of weapons, and before Pedro could even get powder into his gun, the boar made progressive demonstrations. The hunter saw that he had no chance but to run for a tree, and he knew that it was a race for life. Off he bounded through the yielding grass, and close at his heels came the enemy—so close that its hot breath and foam seemed to touch his very heels. It was some distance to the trees, but Pedro, who was very agile, would have got to one ahead of the infuriated beast, had he not stumbled over the root of a saw-palmetto, just as he emerged from the prairie, and fell headlong to the ground. The boar was so close to him that it could not check its headway, but, as it passed over his prostrate form, one of its long, sharp tusks hooked into his hunting-shirt, and rent it from top to bottom, making also a deep gash in the fleshy part of his shoulder.

Stunned by the fall, yet aware of his fearful peril, the Spaniard struggled up to his knees just in time to see his terrible enemy

* It occurred during an armistice, when Gen. Macomb was trying to make a treaty with the Seminoles. Only Col. Harney and one man escaped.

turn and plunge toward him once more, the white foam flying from his mouth, and his red eyes flashing like coals of fire. He could not get up—he crossed himself and closed his eyes, for he thought his time had come. But at that critical instant the sound of a gun rang loud and clear upon his ears, and he opened his eyes to see the boar laying in its last struggles, within a few feet of him, and an Indian standing near, who said :

"Hog too much for pale face, eh?"

"You have saved my life!" cried Pedro, rising, and speaking in Spanish, for the Indian had used that language, which, among the lower of fishing Indians of the coast, was quite common, even up to the time of the late war.

And the next instant the Spaniard, with a wild yell, bounded full ten or twelve feet from where he had been standing, for he felt the poisonous fangs of a serpent sinking deep into his flesh, and as he turned he saw uncoiled the speckled form of a huge moccasin snake, the deadliest of its species.

"Ugh! Me kill snake and then save life again!" said the Indian, coolly, taking his hatchet and striking off the reptile's head.

Meantime Pedro lay rolling and writhing upon the ground, moaning and praying to his saints, for he thought that death was certain now.

"Get up and come to camp of Tustenugge Hadjo. Don't be *squaw!* Great medicine me—make pale face well—make him laugh at snake!" said the Indian, taking Pedro by the arm.

The latter rose with difficulty, for the poison was coursing like fire through his veins, and his wounded leg was already beginning to discolor and swell. As the Indian led him on, he plucked several roots from the earth, and shaking the dirt from them, bade the hunter chew them and swallow the juice. Soon they arrived at the camp, and here Tustenugge put a small kettle upon the hot coals of his campfire, and filling it with water, threw in a quantity of the roots, and increased his fire so that in a brief space the water was boiling. Then, dipping a cloth in the strong decoction, he commenced bathing the wound, first cutting away the flesh so as to permit it to bleed more freely. And putting some of the liquid in a large gourd to cool, he gave it to the patient to drink as soon as it could be swallowed.

The latter, who, for a time, was in fearful agony, now began to feel easier, a profuse sweat broke out all over him, the swelling began to go down, and within a couple of hours he was out of all danger. The Indian bound a parcel of the pulverized and steamed root upon the bite, and then said :

"Pale face all well now—he may go."

"Not till I have rewarded you—twice you have saved my life! Here are three doubloons; if you will go to my fishing ranchee, I will give you more, and make you other presents!"

"Me no like pale faces!" said the Indian, refusing the money; and now that he had done his act of humanity, growing haughty and cold.

"Why, then, did you save my life?"

"I'd save the life of a dog if I did not stop to think him or his race had done me wrong."

"Have the pale-faces done you wrong?"

"One has!"

"It was not me, therefore accept my gift!"

"No, it was not *you!*" replied the Indian, still refusing the money. "It was a great Medicine—more powerful than I. He could turn wine to gall, and I could not kill him with a bullet. He fills my place in my tribe, and I have hid my face from my people, for I was ashamed, and Micanopee was angered with me."

"A pale-face did this? When did he come among you?"

"More than a moon gone by! He came from the big water of salt, in a great canoe with sails!"

"Had he a little child with him?" asked Pedro, eagerly.

"Yes, a squaw papoose!" replied Tustenugge.

"He is *my* enemy—I would drink his blood! I will kill him, and Tustenugge shall go back to his people, for when I have killed the pale-face and stolen his papoose, I will give my red brother many guns and much powder, and lead, and red cloth, and heads, and paint, and jewels for his squaws, and make him rich!" cried Pedro, in a fever of delight, for now he felt sure that with the aid of a cunning and revengeful Indian, he could earn

the fifteen thousand dollars which Marcus Feijger had offered.

"Ugh! Pale-faces have forked tongues! They speak one way and look the other!" said the Indian, with his mind full of suspicion.

"By the God whom the pale-faces worship, I swear that I speak the truth!" said Pedro. "Come to our ranche with me and I will give you presents, and make ready for the expedition, and then we will go together and seek the pale-faced Medicine. We will go to him in the night, and I will kill him, and we will steal the child!"

"What for you want squaw papoose? What good, eh?"

"Oh, I can get money for it—money for his scalp, too!"

"Ugh! me go with you to ranche! kill more deer first, and fill your canoe, though!" said the Indian.

"How do you know I have a canoe?" asked Pedro.

"See you when you come ashore—see you shoot big bug—see you when hog make run—me laugh big laugh, till you fall down—then me feel sorry, kill hog and save you!"

Pedro renewed his thanks and promises, and it was agreed between them to kill game enough to load the canoe, and then they were to go to the ranche and prepare to carry out their plan for the murder of Arpiaka and the abduction of little Ona.

Arpiaka, on his way to his own lodge, the chief spoke to him :

"The Great Spirit will speak in thunder to the wicked to-night!" he said. "His face is very black—the trees of the forest will groan, and the earth will drink the tears of the sky!"

"Yes—there will be a terrible storm!" said Arpiaka, as Chikika passed on.

Soon all was darkness and gloom outside, but within his lodge Arpiaka found light and beauty. Clarita, the lovely daughter of Chikika, was lulling Ona to sleep, and the fair child lay on her swelling bosom like a bud resting on the breast of a flower, while the Indian girl gave low-voiced music to her ear, and ever and anon pressed her ripe red lips to the velvet of the young child's cheek.

A sweet smile came in rosy light on Ona's face, and she opened wide her sleepy eyes, when she saw her loved father, and when he asked her to say mamma's prayer, she lisped the well-remembered words, and then sunk back with parted lips and closed eyes, into the slumber of a cherub. And Clarita bore her into the little curtained room, which had been prepared expressly for them, and laid her down upon her downy bed, and soon, by the side of her sweet charge, was herself wrapped in slumber.

And now, afar off, was heard a sound as of the rumbling of heavy wheels over some hollow causeway. Nearer and nearer came the rolling sound, nearer still, until crash, *crash*—shaking the earth, and seeming to rend the very heavens, came the terrible thunder! Peal after peal, followed by the hissing lightning, and then by torrents of rain, and by a gale, which howled through the forest like a maddened monster, searching for prey—told how heavily the storm came down. And thus, for hours, it raged; and Arpiaka, safe within his strong-built lodge, listened to it, with that dreamy comfort which we all feel, when we hear a storm, yet are sheltered from its effects. His mind overran the past, with its pathway of sunshine and of cloud, and wandered on to the future, when, in his darling child, he should see the matured picture of her sainted mother; and he took no note of time. He was almost asleep, sitting in his easy-chair, when, suddenly, he saw a shadow upon the opposite wall—the shadow of a man, with a raised dagger in his hand.

To leap from his seat, ere the intended blow was struck, to turn and confront two armed men, one an Indian—the hateful Tustenugge—and the other a white man, was the action of a second. The Indian sprung upon him, and grappling with him, nearly cast him to the earth; but the white man rushed into the little room, and, seizing Ona, fled from the house, in spite of the agonized shouts of the father, and his mad struggles to free himself from the grasp of the conjurer. At last, however, he freed one arm, and drawing his knife from his belt, drove it home to the very hilt in the back of Tustenugge, who, with a wild, despairing death-yell, loosed his hold at last, and fell lifeless to the earth.

There was a lull in the storm, and that fearful yell was heard all over the village. In a few moments Chikika was there, and an hundred other warriors, and in his agony Arpiaka told his loss. In less time than it takes to describe it, every warrior in the village was bounding away to search for the robber, while Arpiaka could hardly be restrained by Micanopee, who had come to comfort him, from himself rushing out in the gloom in pursuit, though he knew nothing of the country.

The corpse of the vile conjurer was dragged forth from the lodge, and cast into a lagoon for the alligators to feed upon, for the king of the Seminoles swore it should have no other burial.

And all the rest of that dark and bitter night, Arpiaka passed pacing to and fro in his lodge, praying to Heaven, in his agony, either to restore his child to his bosom, or to remove him from a world wherein sorrow had so accumulated upon him.

Morning came, and dawned all the brighter for the storm of the night before, even as a child which has sobbed itself to sleep, wakes with a flush upon its cheek. And, as the sun went up, warrior after warrior came in, but they brought no tidings of the child. And darker grew the cloud on Arpiaka's face, and heavier the agony of his reft heart. But still a little spark kept the fire of hope alive. The noble, faithful Chikika, and a few of his warriors had not come in—the day advanced, and still they did not return, and Micanopee said,

"Chikika is on the trail, else he would 'ere this have returned!"

It was true, for when he came, it was almost night, but he brought news from the Spanish fishing ranche. The offer of Marcus Febiger was related to him, also as one of their number, *Pedro Picaro*, was missing, also a boat, with sails large enough to take him safely to Key West, whence he could easily get passage to Havana—the probability was, that he had taken the child. This seemed the more probable, because an Indian answering the description of Tustenugle, had come to the ranche with him, and they had gone away in company.

When Arpiaka heard this news, he grew calm in an instant. He felt that he had no time for sighs—it was *action* which was now required, or else his child was lost to him forever. He gave instant orders to refit his little schooner, and put fresh water, and dried meats and bread on board.

"Where is my brother going?" asked Chikika.

"To Havana, to regain Ona, or perish in the attempt!" said Arpiaka.

"Chikika will go with his brother, and take some of his braves with him," said the chief. "And *Maraquita* shall go, for she has friends there, and knows the city well, for there she was born. My brother can put her in the dress of the pale-faced women, and she will be of service to him. And the chief of the pale-faced fishermen, though he is much sick from a cut with the long knife of the captain with the black heart, has offered to be my brother's pilot, for he is sorry for him."

This gave Arpiaka joy, for he saw that he would not be alone in his adventure, but that strong hands and willing hearts would go with him. And he hurried his preparations for the voyage, patching up the shot holes in the sails, and seeing to the stowage of water, provisions, arms and ammunition himself.

And so expeditious were they, that, towed by a long string of canoes down the creek, at sunrise the next morning, they spread the sails of the little schooner to a fresh breeze, in the outer bay, and headed for the fishing ranche, where it was intended to take the brave and good-hearted Pablo on board.

The crew consisted of Chikika and four oft-tried warriors, all of whom spoke Spanish, and his favorite wife *Maraquita*, who, dressed in European style, in one of the dresses of poor Ione, looked now most unlike the wife of a forest chief, and very like a lady.

Rapidly the little craft skimmed over the waves, and soon she reached the ranche. It did not take long after Arpiaka had met Pablo, to secure the services of the latter, who, though very weak, yet was full of fire and energy, and 'ere another hour elapsed, the schooner was outside of the bar, heading on a cruise for Key West, for there Pablo hoped to overtake the treacherous *Picaro*, before he could secure a passage in a larger vessel, for he did not think that the villain would dare to cross the Gulf Stream, in so small a boat as that which he had taken, though tradition says that Indians, in olden times, had crossed in canoes.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was noon, or thereabouts. Don Rafael de Ribera was in the counting-room of his large store and warehouse on Calle de Mercaderes, giving directions to his bookkeepers and clerks, for he was heavily engaged in an apparently regular mercantile business, and few, not even excepting his own clerks, beside those directly interested, were aware of the other nefarious branches of the trade with which he was linked, such as slave catching, piracy, etc., etc. Pablo had spoken the truth when he told Marcus Febiger that he knew who and what Ribera was. Ready to add to his immense fortune by any means, utterly unscrupulous, with thieves and assassins always at command, Ribera was equal to any villainy that the mind of depravity could concoct.

At about the time mentioned above, a man, whose wan face and reddened eyes indicated fatigue and lengthened vigils, presented himself in Ribera's counting-room, and asked to see Dr. Rafael. He was dressed in the coarse garb of a fisherman, and had enough of the scoundrel in his face to satisfy such a keen physiognomist as Don Rafael, that he was one.

"I am Ribera!" said that individual. "What do you want?"

"I have business with you, señor, but I will only reveal it to you in private!"

Ribera at once led the way to an inner office, which was unoccupied. "Now," said he, "you can state your business!"

"A child, if found, was to be delivered to your care for El Capitano Marcus Febiger!" said the man.

"Yes!" replied Ribera.

"My name is Pedro Picaro, a fisherman from the Boca Grande, and I have got that child in the city!"

"Upon its delivery you are entitled to ten thousand dollars, which I will pay. Have you got the scalp of the father, also?"

"No, señor! I had enough to do to get away with the child, but I left the man in a death struggle with a powerful and desperate Indian, and do not doubt but that he fell in the conflict. I had no time to await the result, for the Indian village was alarmed, and a rapid flight only could save me, and I knew from the words of el capitano that the possession of the child was all-important!"

"True, my good fellow, true!"

"Shall I bring the child at once, señor?" asked Pedro, whose fingers itched to handle a sum of money larger than he, in his wildest dreams, had ever thought of possessing.

"No, bring it to my private residence in Calle Obradapia, to-night at ten, when I am disengaged, and your money shall be ready for you!" replied Ribera. "I do not wish it seen here, and shall be occupied until then!"

"I will be there at the hour, señor!" said Pedro, and he departed.

* * * * *

It lacked but a half hour of ten, and Don Rafael de Ribera sat in the room where we first saw him. Before him, upon a table, lay ten thousand dollars in gold, ready to be paid upon the delivery of poor Ona.

A knock, peculiar in its character, for it was four distinct raps repeated at intervals of about ten seconds, was heard at the door, and Ribera bade the *rappor* enter.

A man came in, whose small snake-like eyes glittered from under a dark, cliff-like brow, and whose slender yet muscular figure gave token of great activity as well as strength. His features and expression were not such as you would like to note in a new-found travelling companion, if you were in a lonely vicinity.

"You sent for me, señor; have you work for me? If so, I'm glad, for I'm on my last doubleon, and my *cuchillo* (knife) is growing rusty for want of use!" said this man, as he came in.

"Yes," replied Ribera, "you know that I only send for you when I want you. I leave you to devote the rest of your time to *monte* and the women!"

"Which are such expensive pastimes that the more often you send for me the better am I suited?" replied the other. "But what have I to do now?"

"You observe this gold?"

"Seeing that it is before me, I can't well help it, señor," said the other; "but I have no objection to making a closer observation!"

"Well, you can do so, and with my consent. There are ten thousand *pesos* there, which I shall pay to a man who will be here in twenty minutes. You will know him when he comes, if you watch outside, by his having a small child with him. When he leaves he will bear with him this money, and a secret which I should like to have hushed forever. Attend to him, and take half of that money—restore to me the other half!"

"It shall be done, señor!" said the professional assassin, for such he was, drawing his long, broad-bladed but sharp-pointed and doubled-edged knife, and feeling of its edges.

And then, with a kind of coarse smile, he said:

"What should hinder me from keeping all, señor?"

"The knowledge that I never would employ you again!" replied Ribera.

"True, señor, you have been too valuable a patron for me to lose by dishonesty. Do not retire after he leaves you; I shall make it quick work and sure, with him, and you shall have your gold back before you sleep!"

"Don't do the job to near my door—the authorities might smell blood inside if you did!"

"No danger, señor; I'll drop him before the door of some holy padre, so that if he can't have the consolation of religion in his last

moments, he may be within smelling distance of it!"

"Very well, go to your post now, Battista; it lacks but ten minutes of the time, and men wanting money are more apt to be early than late!"

The assassin bowed and departed. Scarcely had he gone when *Pedro Picaro* entered with the child.

Poor Ona, she was as pale as a white cloth, and her great, dark eyes were reddened with long weeping. She seemed to be almost dead with terror.

"This is the child, señor!" said the villain.

"And there is your money; take it, and much good may it do you!" said Ribera, at the same time ringing a bell.

Pedro clutched the gold, and, without stopping to count it, thrust it into his pockets with a nervous hand. He had but just done so when a servant entered.

"Send Monona here!" said Ribera to the servant.

"If I get the scalp of the father, I will see you again, señor!" said *Pedro*, as he turned to depart.

"Do!" said Ribera, with a covert smile upon his face.

Pedro had but just left the room when a very good-looking Spanish girl came in.

"Monona, take this poor little thing and care for it tenderly, until its relatives call for it; but let it not be out of your sight for a moment. I hold you responsible for its safety!" said Ribera.

The girl took Ona up and spoke kind words and kissed her, and then the speechless terror of the child passed away, and while two great tears rose in her eyes, she murmured: "Oh, take Ona to her papa!"

"Yes, by-and-bye, love!" said Monona. "Come with me, now, and I will give you something nice!"

The child smiled through her tears, a sweet, bright smile, like sunlight shining through a shower, and cheerfully went with her new nurse.

Then Ribera waited for the return of Battista. He had not long to wait. In a very few minutes that individual came in and emptied out the gold upon the table which *Pedro* had carried away, also several other articles, such as a knife, silver crucifix, cigar case, etc., which he had found on the body of the wretch who had most deservedly met death just when he had consummated his basality and received the reward.

Battista was as calm and collected as if he had only been knocking some worthless cur in the head, or been martyring a litter of blind kittens. No nervousness about him! He was too much in practice to be guilty of that.

"You're back very speedily; did he give you any trouble, Battista?" asked Ribera, as the assassin entered.

"None in the world, señor. He laid down and went to sleep without a word! I gave him about eight inches right between the shoulders. There is the money, you can count out my proportion."

"How many does this make, Battista, that you have sent to a better world for me?" asked Ribera, as he commenced laying the doubleons off equally in two piles.

"Nineteen, señor!" said Battista, pausing a moment to count up. "Nineteen, and I hope, señor, that you'll soon find me a twentieth, for I hate odd numbers deucedly."

"We'll see, we'll see; there is one man, if I can get him here, from New York, whose score I should like to wipe out! But always be within reach of me, no fear but that I shall keep you in work as long as you are sure and trusty!"

"I will do so, señor," said the assassin, and then he took his gold and departed.

CHAPTER XIV.

A precious trio sat in the same room in the old stone mansion, where, so far, we have only met Mr. Febiger, senior, and his visitors. It consisted of that individual, his son, and Counsellor Blacking. And money was the text upon which they held dialogue-ic discourse—money, that curse which every one, (except authors), seems so ready to bear—that "necessary evil"—I quote from Daly, *Justice* (?)—which makes more men villains, more women unvirtuous and more people miserable,

generally, than any other ill on earth. By the banishment of money, the Spartans became the purest, noblest race on earth; luxury was afterwards introduced, and they dwindled down to less than nothing.

"Don't you think you can make some evidence, which will suit our purpose in the Orphan's Court? Something to silence that very conscientious judge?" asked the eldest Febiger.

"Had not some meddling individual not only notified him of the marriage, but also of the birth of her child, it might be done. I could get men to swear that both were dead, but then the husband would be asked after—certificates of burial required, and many a question asked which will bother us for a reply! Some one in this city is keeping a watch on us, I am sure, and as we tread in the dark, we must step carefully!"

"Can it be that cursed old Queer, that is meddling? He used to be very intimate with Ione's father!" said the elder Febiger.

"If I thought so, he'd drop off of one of our wharves, with a '56 tied to his neck, one of these dark nights," muttered Marcus.

At that moment a servant entered with a letter, which he handed to the last-named person.

"Hip, hip, hurrah! hurrah! Eureka, she is found, and safe in the hands of Ribera!" cried Marcus, as he hastily glanced over the contents of the letter.

"And her father?" asked the father.

"Left in a death-hug with an Indian, and supposed to be properly cared for!" said Marcus, carelessly,

"All will then go easy!" said the wily counsellor. "Produce the child to the court, with evidence which we can make of the death of both of her parents by fever, or something of that sort, in the south, and claim your rights as her nearest relative and natural guardian!"

"Yes, I see!" said the elder Febiger.

"Then," continued the wretch, "if she should take sick and die, of course all her property reverts to you!"

"I see, I see!" and the old man rubbed his thin dry hands together with pleasure.

"Well, I'll be off in the Belladonna after the brat, as soon as I can get provisions and water aboard!" said Marcus.

"I think I'll take the voyage with you!" said his father. "I want to see Ribera—it is a long time since I have had a settlement with him! I can easily so arrange my business as to leave it."

"Well, sir, there's plenty of room for you, but what about the marriage with old Tapscott's girl, that you say you've arranged for me. You say she'll bring in a clear half million—hadn't that better be attended to before we go, and then let a bridal trip be our excuse for going out in ballast?"

"Yes, my son, yes; you are thoughtful and right. It can very easily be arranged, for the girl, if she doesn't exactly love you, does not dislike you, and is, as all girls ought to be, obedient to her father, who snapped at the bait I offered the moment he saw it! Yes, I will see him at once, and have the union brought about as soon as possible. Meantime, since Ribera has got the child, I have no fear for its safety. He is as true as steel!"

"Where it is his interest to be so!" said Marcus, drily.

"As it surely is in this case, and in all of his dealings with me!" said the old man. "You had better make Miss Tapscott a visit to-night, and play the agreeable, as you know full well how to do!" continued Mr. Febiger to his son. "In the meanwhile, I will see the father to-day, and urge the matter on!"

"Very well, sir, I'll try and work up to the young lady—I think I can please when I try!"

CHAPTER XV.

The night was dark and stormy when Arpiaka's schooner came in sight of the light which stands on Moro's lofty height, at the mouth of the harbor of Habana. He had been in Key West, and there had learned that a small boat like that in which Pedro Picaro had fled, had been seen off the coast, steering south-west for the Havana, but had not stopped. He only remained long enough to take out a registry and papers for his boat, which, with the aid of a little money, he managed to do, and then cleared regularly for

Habana, knowing what a strict surveillance was kept in that port, and the necessity of care in his movements. He had called his schooner the "Ione," in memory of his loved one, lost forever.

"Shall we run in to-night, Pablo?" he asked of his pilot.

"It is against the rules of the harbor, senor, but with such a gale as this blowing, and every appearance of an increase, I think that our necessity and danger will excuse us, even if the captain of the guard boat should see and bring us to. But, ten chances to one that we shall slip in unobserved in the darkness, and, if we do, I will steer up past the shipping in the harbor, and run into a little dock where I think we can lay unnoticed. If we succeed in that, I will go on shore with Maraquita, who, as well as myself, has friends here, and we will arrange for an interview with Ribera, and also for carrying off the child in safety, if we get her."

"If, Pablo—if? There must be no if about it. I will recover her or perish!"

"I pray the holy virgin that you may, senor; but we must be cautious. I must first learn whether not Ribera has the child. That can be done through Maraquita, for I have laid the plan for her."

"You are a brave and noble man, Pablo. If we succeed, your reward shall place you in independence for life."

"I have begged you before, senor, not to speak to me of a reward. Gold is not my impelling power. Rather than to possess one thousand doubloons in my hand, would I have one blow with a true blade, at that cowardly villain who struck me down at his feet!"

The light on the Moro grew brighter and brighter each moment that they conversed, for they were nearing it now very rapidly, for the water was more smooth after they left the current of the Gulf Stream.

All of Arpiaka's crew—now much altered in appearance, for they had laid aside their forest garb and were dressed as sailors—were on the alert, watching the light on the rocky height, and occasionally glancing at the other lights which, through the dense darkness, could be seen twinkling on the shore. Pablo, now that he had marks to steer by, put out the lamps of their little binnacle, and made every one on board keep the most perfect silence.

It was after midnight when the "Ione" swept in through the narrow entrance between the Punta and the Moro, and, though she passed very near the guard-boat, which they knew by its light, and which lay moored to one of the buoys placed above the wreck of an English frigate, sunk there many years before. She was not hailed. Nor in passing up the crowded harbor did she meet with any obstruction, and, in a short time, Pablo, with a skillful hand, ran her into the little obscure and disused dock which he had named, where, close under the shadow of some old buildings falling into ruins, she lay.

"Senor, if you please, be seen as little as possible, and keep the crew out of sight until I return," said Pablo. "I go to see if the Belladonna is in the harbor, and Maraquita will go with me to learn where the child is."

"How soon will you return?" asked Arpiaka.

"As soon as that which I have said I would do is done!" replied the old fisherman. "Let me entreat you, senor," he continued, "to be patient. This Ribera is immensely wealthy and unscrupulous. He has ever a gang of assassins at his beck, and the least imprudence on our part will put him on his guard, and then not a chance of success would be left to us, even if we escaped with our lives."

"I put the entire direction of the matter in your hands, Pablo," replied Arpiaka, "for your bravery and prudence are unequalled. Money will be useful, will it not, in your enterprise?"

"It may be, senor. In this city it is more powerful than steel."

"Then take with you this bag of gold. Fear not to use it freely, I have plenty more on board."

"I will not misuse it, senor. And now, for a time, farewell! Come, Maraquita, come."

The pilot and Chikika's wife now stepped on shore, and Arpiaka and his crew retired into the little cabin, all seeking repose except the former, whose anxiety would not permit him to close his eyes.

It was nearly noon of the next day before Pablo returned, and Arpiaka began to serious-

ly fear that the former had met with some misfortune, or had been forcibly detained. His patience was nearly exhausted, when Canovas made his appearance.

"I suppose you feared I would never come," said the pilot.

"If you come with news as bright as your face, you will lift a heavy load from my heart," replied Arpiaka. "Time hangs with clogging weight upon an anxious mind."

"My news is good," replied Pablo. "The child is here and in the house of Ribera. If you will adopt a plan which I have been working up in my own mind, I think you can obtain her without a doubt."

"Name your plan, and do not fear but that I will adopt it."

"Go boldly to Ribera at his counting-room and ask for a private interview; then pretend you have a large capital which you wish to entrust to his care, to be invested in the slave trade. As he works that business very secretly, for fear of British interference, he will probably ask you to his house to make your deposit at night, and we, in carrying your boxes, supposed to contain gold, can be introduced along with you into the house. Then, if we cannot force him to deliver the child, I am mistaken in our power."

"An excellent plan. He does not, I am convinced, know me, and it cannot fail. I will put it into execution at once. Is the Belladonna in port?"

"No, senor."

"Then we surely will succeed!"

"I think so, senor. I hope that all will be done to-night, for the wind blows fair off the coast, and we may be as lucky in leaving the harbor as we were in coming in. By the way, senor, I have heard of Pedro Picaro, who stole the child away."

"What of the wretch?"

He was found assassinated in the street, without a *reale* about him. It was probably done by some of Ribera's bravos, to regain the money which he paid him."

"It is good news. The villain is out of our way, and properly punished for his crimes!" said Arpiaka, as he entered the cabin, and proceeded to arrange his toilet, preparatory to his visit to Ribera, whether it is scarcely necessary for us to accompany him, since we know what his business is.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was night once more, and Ribera sat in his favorite apartment—favorite because it was so near his cherished gold—smoking as usual. And a look of satisfaction was seated upon his repulsive face, for he anticipated a large addition to his already enormous hoard.

"What infernal fools these Yankees are!" he said to himself. "Though slavery exists in half their states, or more, they're afraid to run a 'Black-Bird Line' for their own coast, but are willing to make money off the trade with us! If they only knew how to get work out of niggers as our planters do, they'd have to import the article, or their stock would soon run out. They go in for breeding; we go in for buying fresh stock as fast as the old wears out, and don't have any bother with such worthless stock as young or old niggers!"

What the fellow said was then true, and is to this day, in Cuba, and will be, so long as she remains under Spanish rule.

Ribera's cogitations were cut short by a knock at his door, and the next moment Arpiaka entered.

"Ah, good evening, senor Americana; you are punctual, I see!" said the Spaniard.

"In weighty matters, I always am!" replied Arpiaka. "My men are below with the gold; shall I order them up here?"

"If you please, senor!"

Arpiaka gave a low whistle, and immediately Pablo and Chikika, with three of his best warriors, all clad as mariners, appeared, each bearing a heavy box, which, at a sign from Arpiaka, they deposited on the floor near Ribera, whose snake-like eyes glittered with pleasure as he looked upon the supposed treasure.

"Your men can retire, senor!" said he, "and we will count your gold, and see that it is right, and then I will give you a receipt for it!"

"A question or two, if you please, senor Ribera, before they retire!" said Arpiaka. "

believe that you recently made the acquaintance of one *Pedro Picaro!*"

Ribera started as if he had been stung by a scorpion, and a greyish pallor overspread his swarthy face.

"Can you tell me where he is? One of my men is an old comrade of his!" continued Arpiaka.

"What has that to do with our business, señor?" asked Ribera, with a tremor in his voice.

"Much with mine!" said Arpiaka, sternly. "Where is the child for the delivery of which you paid ten thousand dollars?"

"Beyond your reach, curse you! This is your business, is it!" cried Ribera, springing toward a bell on the table. But he did not reach it, for, with a glittering knife in his hand, Pablo sprung before him.

In a second a knife also flashed in Ribera's hand, and he turned upon Arpiaka, but Chikika wrenched the weapon from him with one hand, and with the other clutched his throat with a suffocating grasp.

"You are not quite so expert as the assassin of *Pedro Picaro!*" said Arpiaka. "Do not hold him quite so tight, Chikika, you will not leave him breath enough to answer a few more questions I have to ask!"

The chief relaxed his hold, but when Ribera attempted to raise an alarm by an outcry, he renewed his vice-like grasp.

"If you attempt the least alarm, your life shall be the forfeit!" said Arpiaka, sternly, now for the first time drawing a weapon. "I am no trifler, so beware! I came here for my child—where is she? Chikika, release his throat, but if he utters one word, except to reply to my questions, choke him to death as you would a worthless dog!"

The chief obeyed, and the almost suffocated Spaniard was allowed a chance to breathe once more.

"Speak, villain, speak! Where is my child?"

"In my house, in the care of a nurse!" gasped the now thoroughly terrified wretch. "Let me go, and I will bring her to you!"

"Softly, Don Rafael, softly! I am not quite such a fool as that. You will have the kindness to tell me in what apartment the child is, and I will go for it, leaving you in care of those who will take your life at the first sign of treachery or attempt to make an alarm! Speak now, and no deceit, or you will not have much time to repent in!"

"She is in the second room to the right, as you pass out of that door, señor!" said Ribera, pointing to a different passage from that by which they had entered.

"If you deceive me, remember that you die!" said Arpiaka, sternly, as he took a lamp from the table and turned toward the door.

"I speak the truth!" said Ribera, as Arpiaka went out.

"It's a wonder that it don't choke you!" muttered Pablo.

In a few moments Arpiaka returned, and in his arms was Ona, who clung to his neck and covered his face with kisses, while she sobbed joyfully, "Papa—papa—dear papa!"

Before him, pale with terror, came Monona, the nurse, for he was determined to prevent any chance of an alarm being given, and she was the only one he had met. Carefully locking the door by which he had entered, Arpiaka put the key in his pocket, and then said.

"Bind and gag both Ribera and the girl quickly; do your work securely, for no alarm must be given until we have left the city far behind!"

Ribera began to beg and Monona to weep.

"I am sorry for you, my poor girl!" said Arpiaka, kindly, "but I must do this to save my child. You will probably be released by morning, and will suffer no injury, but we must leave you secured for our own safety. As to Ribera, I would do no more than justice were I to silence him forever. He may well be thankful that I spare his life. Bind the villain tight, Pablo, and put a gag in his mouth which he can't swallow!"

The old fisherman needed no urging on that point. He so detested the character of Ribera that he would have willingly silenced him forever, instead of temporarily, if that had been the order.

In a short time, the two were firmly secured and laid upon their backs in different parts of the room, and so fastened that they could not aid each other in any way. Then wrapping

* Slave ships are so named.

Ona in his cloak, Arpiaka and his men departed, he carefully locking the door behind him, and carrying the key away.

"Your master bade me tell you that he must not be disturbed by any one; he is engaged on business for me!" said Arpiaka to the porter, as he went out.

"I will obey him, señor; the Pope shouldn't see him if he came!" replied the man, bowing very low, for a doubloon had been placed in his hand.

One hour later and the gallant little schooner dashed out of the harbor as swiftly and quietly as she had come in, and before the day dawned she was far out upon the blue waters of the gulf, so far that only the dim outlines of the "Paps" and the Sierras de Hierro could be seen from her deck. And, almost as lightly as she danced over the waves, bounded the heart of Arpiaka, for he had recovered his child, and he was now determined to so guard her, that she never again should be wrested from him. He knew very well why they had abducted her, and the value of the fortune to which she was heir, and that no risk would be considered too great or adventure too desperate by the Febigers, if she could be snatched from him.

The return voyage of the "Ione" was speedy and prosperous. And Arpiaka's arrival with Ona, at the Seminole village, was hailed with rapturous delight, for in the eyes of the tribe he stood second only to Micanopee. And that good chief embraced him, and gave orders that hereafter watchful sentinels should ever keep guard around his lodge, although Arpiaka felt safe since Tustenugge and Pedro Picaro were both dead, for he knew of no one else who was near that felt enmity toward him.

But the old king was firm in his resolve, and the sentinels were posted. And once more Clarita clasped her lovely charge to her pure young bosom, and again the Indian maidens almost deluged the child with flowers and fruit.

CHAPTER XVII.

Nearly a month had elapsed since Ona had been wrested from the charge of Ribera, and not having heard from the Febigers, he almost hoped, under the circumstances, that his letter to Marcus had miscarried, but he was disappointed there. For one day, about the time mentioned above, one of his clerks came in and announced that the "Belladonna" had just arrived and cast anchor in the harbor.

He did not wish to meet Marcus Febiger in his counting-room, for he expected "a scene" when his news was broken; therefore, as it was nearly night, he repaired to his private residence, and there awaited the anticipated visit.

He had not long to tarry, for an half hour had not passed when Marcus Febiger made his appearance.

"How are you, my old friend, king of the Black Birds, etc., how are you!" he cried heartily, as he extended his hand to Ribera upon entering.

"How do you do, captain, how do you do? Sit down; how did you leave your father?"

"As sick as a dolphin with a hook in its mouth; he's been sea-sick all the way out, but a night's rest in smooth water will put him to rights! He'll wet his whistle with you in the morning!"

"What, is he a passenger with you?"

"Yes, and I have another—my wife! I know that surprises you, but a half million of dollars induced me to sacrifice myself, and the girl wasn't bad looking!"

"I congratulate you! You must make my house your home during your stay here. Your bride and your father will be most welcome!"

"Our stay will be short, Don Rafael. My father at last begins to feel that he is almost rich enough, and talks of drawing in his funds and retiring from business. His object in coming out was to see you and close up matters, I believe! But how is the little girl?"

"Ah, captain, I have bad news there!"

"What, is she dead? Well, that doesn't matter, for the property will all revert to my father, and remain in the family!"

"But she is *not* dead! I wish she was, or had been before she was brought here!"

"The devil! Where is she?"

"Her father, aided by a gang of Indians and an old Spaniard, who knew me, rescued her from my charge and nearly killed me. For over twelve hours I and her nurse lay gagged in this room, and bound so tight that we could not move. It was hours after I was discovered and released before I could stand!"

"How in the name of Satan could he get to windward of you?"

"By pretending to be what he was not, for you gave me no description, not even his name, which I do not know now. He pretended that he wanted to invest money in the Guinea trade; I believed him, told him to have it brought here, and thus he and his gang were introduced. Having me in his power, he bound and gagged me as I have told you, and then carried away the child, and with his Indian allies fled, the Lord above only knows where, for I could get no track of him after I was released!"

"This is a pretty kettle of fish!" muttered young Febiger. "The old man will be madder than a stump-tailed bull in fly-time, when he hears of it!"

"Getting mad will not help the matter!" said Ribera. "I did my best, paid out ten thousand dollars for the child, and kept her safely until the father tricked me!"

"Curse him; I'd like to have him in range of my pistols!"

"I wouldn't, if he was armed!" said Ribera. "He has got enough of the devil in him when he's roused, I can assure you of that!"

"I'll send him where he can get a little more!"—said Febiger, bitterly—"from the original source, if ever I meet him!"

"I suppose you'll 'retire' too, now that you have got married!" said Ribera, wishing to change the subject.

"Cursed the bit will I! No, I cannot live without excitement, and as soon as I near the edge of my honeymoon, I shall be in my old track again. But I don't like this news of yours—it will set worse than sea-sickness on my father's stomach. For years he had been arranging for me to marry the mother of that child, and thus to secure her fortune. But the pretty fool took a dislike to me and my rough ways, and took a liking to another—and when my father tried a little coercion, she suddenly turned up among the missing, and the next we heard of her was on the receipt of a copy of her certificate of marriage!"

"And your father, you say, thinks of drawing in all his capital from the trade, and quitting business?"

"Yes, so he says—but I must be off aboard. You'll see him in the morning, and if he don't come like a north-easter, I'm mistaken. Good night!"

"He'd better come in a calm; he's not in New York now, and never *may* be, if he arouses the serpent in my nature!" muttered the Spaniard, after young Febiger had gone. "If he withdraws all his money, he'll cripple some of my boldest operations. By a strict account, and doubtless he keeps one, I should have to pay him nearly *three millions of dollars*. It must not be done. No, he dies first! The son has no heart, and will rather rejoice than mourn if the old man is put out of the way, for he is a spend-thrift, and will be glad to have what he never has had—a full sweep at a few millions. I can fool him in my accounts, which is more than I can do with his father. Yes, if the old man annoys me, he must travel the path! I have too much at risk to have one man place a barrier in my way and live!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

True to the prognostication of his son, recovered from his sea-sickness, and literally "boiling over" with rage and disappointment, the elder Febiger came like a "north-easter," the butt-end of one at that, to the house of Ribera, at an early hour the next morning.

His usually pale face was red with passion—his lank frame was quivering with nervous agitation—his usually placid and calculating coolness all gone.

"My dear sir, I am very glad to see you!" said Ribera, politely, as he received his choleric visiter.

"And I'm cursed sorry to see you, under the circumstances. You had a fortune of mine in your hands when you had that child, and you've lost it, sir—lost it!"

"Through no fault of mine, my dear sir!"

"It's a lie, sir, it's a lie! You should have

locked her up where you keep your gold, sir—have killed her before you parted with her!"

Ribera's face grew black with passion, but with a strong effort of will he so mastered it as to hide all outward show in a moment, and he replied.

"Such were not my instructions!"

"Curse a man that always needs instructions! What is judgment given to a man for? I suppose you expect the ten thousand dollars that you paid for the child?"

"Having paid it out by your son's order, of course I do!"

"You shall never have a cent of it!"

"I believe I have considerable money in my hands belonging to you, Mr. Febiger?"

"Yes, but you'll not say so two hours from now! I demand an instant settlement!"

"Are you prepared to close up your accounts, sir?" said Ribera, and a sinister, almost sardonic smile, flitted over his face as he spoke.

"Yes—have got my account-book with me on purpose!" said Febiger, producing a small ledger.

"Are all our transactions recorded in that small book?" asked Ribera, with an air and tone of curious surprise.

"Yes, and by my own hand! Do you think I require a dozen volumes, and a half a score of clerks, for such a matter?"

A gleam of satisfaction passed over the countenance of Ribera, as he replied:

"By no means, my dear sir—I do not underrate your business capacity at all. But let us proceed to business, at least, in a good humor. I have been unfortunate enough in displeasing you, let alone the loss of ten thousand dollars, for of that I'll say no more. Take a glass of wine with me, and then we will proceed to compare accounts!"

"Now that you are beginning to talk reason, I will!" replied Febiger, coming down a little in his tempestuous anger.

The wily and remorseless Spaniard opened a small cupboard, and poured out two goblets of wine. He did not pour both from the same bottle, though in color they did not differ. But Febiger did not observe this, for his eye was running over a column of figures in his account-book.

"Here is some choice old wine, sir—such as you probably never tasted before!" said Ribera, handing him one goblet, and raising the other to his own lips. "Your health, sir, and success to you on your next voyage!"

Febiger merely nodded, and drained his glass at the same time with Ribera.

"It is old—it smacks of—of—death! You've murdered me!" he yelled, as a sudden fire seemed to dart through him.

With a face distorted with sudden and indescribable agony, and his hands open to clutch the Spaniard by the throat, he made one bound toward him—but fell short of his mark—fell dead upon the floor!

"A very sudden case of *apoplexy*—that poison leaves no trace!" said the murderer, calmly, taking out his pocket handkerchief, and wiping away a little froth which had gathered upon the dead man's lips.

Then he rung a bell, and said to the servant: "Hasten to the schooner 'Belladonna,' which is in the harbor, and tell Captain Febiger to hurry up here. I must see him instantly! Say nothing more!"

The servant, whose eye had glanced with a momentary horror upon the white face of the corpse, hurried away, and then Ribera took possession of the account-book which Febiger had brought, and after glancing at it a moment, he opened a secret panel in the ceiling, and there concealed it.

"I rather think our accounts are settled!" said he, as he glanced toward his victim. "The man who tells Ribera that he lies, in his own house, is apt to lie himself, stiff and cold, before he leaves it! And the son had better keep a cool tongue between his teeth, or he'll follow in the footsteps of his miserly father! But if I can keep him in play, I will, for he is careless and generous, and I can make what I please out of him!"

It was not long before Marcus Febiger made his appearance. When he entered the room where Ribera was, he found the latter pacing to and fro, apparently in a state of terrible agitation.

"What is the matter, my king of the Black Birds?" he cried, gailey, for, at first, he did not see the corpse of his father.

"Look there!" said Ribera, pointing to the body. "Mr. Febiger came in, apparently

choking with anger, and before he had been in half a minute, or spoken five words, he fell in a fit, and died almost instantly. I knew that it was useless to call in a physician, so sent for you!"

"You must call a physician to certify to the cause of his death—he always was apoplectic!" said the son, evincing no emotion whatever, and looking quite unconcerned upon the mortal remains before him.

Ribera at once sent for a physician, from whom he could get any kind of a certificate that he desired. He was speedy in his attendance, and after a brief examination of the body, and one or two inquiries about the symptoms of his attack, gave a certificate without any hesitation, that he died of *apoplexy*. A purse of gold, slipped slyly into his hand, by Ribera, rewarded him, and he departed.

"I presume that you will have the body removed to New York, for interment!" said Ribera. "A leaden coffin will preserve it."

"I suppose that I must!" said Marcus, "just for the looks of the thing—though I don't care where he lays! His stepping out leaves me independent!"

"Yes, very rich, but yet you'd like to be richer, wouldn't you?"

"Of course; for I'm going to make money fly now, I can tell you!"

"Then you had better leave your father's deposits in my hands for the present—they're invested in 'my black bird line,' and will realize immense profits this season!"

"Well, I'm agreed—but, Ribera, do me a favor!"

"What is it, my dear friend? Be assured I shall comply with your request; name your desire!"

"Just pack the old man up right, and ship him home, to New York, by the first packet. I wouldn't have his corpse on board of the Belladonna for a dozen times its weight in gold!"

"It shall be done as you desire—won't you take a little something to strengthen you under this trial?"

"Don't care if I do, if it is good and strong!" replied the feelingless son, in a careless manner.

Brandy was brought and drank freely by both, while yet the corps of the murdered man lay before them.

"Are you going to make any further search for the child?" asked Ribera, after they had imbibed.

"No—blast it, no! Not at present, at least, for I've enough to come and go on for years! If she don't turn up again, I'll have her property at any rate, and that's all that we have ever cared for!"

"When will you go back to New York?"

"Right away, so as to be ready to receive the old man's body, and have a grand funeral! That'll have to be done to satisfy the world, you know, though it's all humbug—throwing money away which might be spent to a better purpose!"

"Oh, I wouldn't begrudge him a handsome burial. He leaves you possessed of ample means!"

"Yes, indeed! He wasn't such a bloody old fool as to leave half his fortune to build up hospitals, or colleges, or orphan asylums. He knew too much for that. He knew that I could take better care of his money than all that would come to. But, good day—I must go aboard and tell my wife that she has lost her daddy-in-law. Got to break it easy, too, for she's a kind of nervous delicate bit of womanity! See to the packing up of him as soon as possible!"

Humming an old sea-song, the heartless son went off, leaving even Ribera shocked at his levity and want of feeling.

CHAPTER XIX.

With pomp and parade, such as wealth always can command in the great city—with a lengthened train of *mourners* (?) in gorgeous carriages, following a splendid hearse, drawn by plumed horses, all that was mortal of Febiger, the victim of "*apoplexy*," was entombed, amid the monuments of Greenwood. And over his grave a lofty monument was reared to commemorate his virtues—*his* virtues, even those which the hired priest had so eulogised in his eloquent and carefully written funeral sermon.

His virtues! What were they? Those of

many another millionaire who counts his ill-gotten gold in our midst. To break the laws of God and man—to cheat the rich and wrong the poor—to rob the orphan and swell the widow's brimming cup of grief. Oh! holy man of God dilate upon *his* virtues—let the gilded dome of your house of man-worship ring to your well-turned sentences, and then—then go revel on the gold you have earned by lying, lying in the name of the *Most High*!

Yes, the father of Marcus Febiger, with all due form and ceremony, had been deposited in sanctified ground, for unsanctified worms to make banquet of, and now, sole master of his ancestral halls, the son and heir to almost countless wealth was laying his plans to spend his riches and "enjoy life."

We will pay him a visit. He is engaged with Mr. Blacking, so long his father's ready and userupulous tool and legal adviser, in looking over his father's will, papers, &c.

"So you say, that in this chest everything, deeds, titles, accounts, memorandums of stocks, &c., are deposited!" said Marcus, pointing to a massive iron chest, which was enclosed in a vault or safe, built in the wall of the room in which they sat.

"Yes, sir," replied Blacking; "he arranged everything with his own hands before he sat out upon his voyage. Little did I dream that it would be his last!"

"Very well, Blacking, very well," said Marcus, at the same time filling up a check. "Here is a check for the five thousand dollars he has left you in his will—you can go and draw it, and needn't trouble yourself to come back again!"

"Sir?"

"I spoke plain enough, I should think, for a man of your discrimination to understand me!" said Marcus, handing him the check

"Draw your money and leave!"

"What, sir, do you discharge me?"

"Yes?"

"May I know what I've done to deserve this treatment?"

"You've done nothing in particular, but you're a devilish old bore, and I don't want you around me! Do you understand that?"

"I do, sir! But I doubt whether you understand yourself!" said the lawyer, bitterly. "You'll find it hard to get along without me, for I, and I only, thoroughly understand your late father's business!"

"I'll risk it! And I want no more words. You can pack up your duds and leave!"

"Marcus Febiger!" said the lawyer, rising, "I will go, but mark you, by this meanness and ingratitude, you have made an enemy who will drag thousands from your coffers! I neither fear or respect you, but I'll make you regret this hour to the end of your life. Your secrets are no secrets to me, and I'll use them!"

Before Febiger could recover from the surprise which this boldness, in the usually humble lawyer, had occasioned, he was alone Blacking had left.

CHAPTER XX.

"How are you, Mr. Queer—how are you? You are just the man I was looking for!" cried Mr. Blacking, as, after drawing his money from the bank, he espied the former personage sauntering with a thoughtful air along Wall street, looking as if he was pondering over some weighty financial undertaking.

The truth was, that Mr. Queer had two ways of showing his business importance in that thoroughfare of Mammon—two entire suits of appearance to wear. One was the air studious and abstractive, in which we now find him; the other was air hurried—a rushing along the street as if the old boy was after him, and he had no place to hide in. Meet him when he wore the first air—he would say, in the politest manner:

"I beg you not to disturb me at present, my dear sir—I have a very heavy transaction before me, and am giving it my most serious consideration!"

If he wore the other air, and you interrupted him, he would say:

"Don't detain me, I pray, my dear sir! I have thirty thousand to raise for a friend before the bank closes, and am in great haste!"

And yet the amount of his study and his haste, was all in his "mind's eye, Horatio."

Looking up, when he was addressed, and seeing Blacking, whom he had known as the "legal man" of the wealthy Febiger's, and

seeing also the large roll of bills which the lawyer was stowing away in a huge pocket-book, Queer at once emerged from his abstraction, put his head out of his shell like a hawk's-billed turtle, and with a baboonish smile upon his smooth face, said :

"Ah, my dear Mr. Blacking, how do you do! What a sad affair that was—the death of Mr. Febiger, Senior—so sudden, poor fellow! The last time I had the honor to take wine with him his mind seemed depressed. Some poet, either Milton, or Sir Walter Smollet, or Thomas Howard Paine, or Fenimore Dickens—I forget which, for I read but little now, except stock, and bank, and railroad reports—says that 'coming events sends shadows fore 'em'; and I think that even then he was looking through his soul's eyes at the shadow of death! Don't you, Mr Blacking?"

"If he had a soul, which I very much doubt!" said Mr. Blacking, putting his pocket-book away, and buttoning his coat over it, as if to shut it out from the greedy grasps of the world's hyenas.

"Why, you were on the best of terms with him, were you not?"

"Yes, as a handsome legacy, which he has left me, will prove! But it was because I was necessary to him—not that he loved me! He never loved *any* one! His heart was as dry as a burned bone. But he was better than his son! He is a mean, dirty scoundrel!"

"What! have you quarreled with him?"

"Yes, and left him! I wouldn't do his business for twenty thousand a year! But I'll cost him more than that. I know every secret of his father's and his, and I'll teach him a lesson, which, while it satisfies my hate, will also fill my pockets!"

"I'm glad to hear of it!" said Queer—"glad to hear of it, for he insulted me the last time I met him! Let us go into the Tontine and sample their liquor, and then we'll have a talk about this matter, for I'm with you heart and hand!"

The lawyer, though usually very abstemious, was not now in a humor to refuse the invitation, the more especially that he wanted to make use of Mr. Queer, as will hereinafter appear. Therefore, arm in arm, the two "worthies" departed for that ancient "place of spirits," and there imbibed.

"I believe that you were acquainted with Miss Ione, the late Mr. Febiger's niece and ward!" said Blacking, after he had wiped his lips with a yellow bandanna handkerchief.

"Yes," replied Queer, "slightly with her, but most intimately with her father, his half-brother, who was his superior in every way. Poor Sinclair! he was a noble fellow—knew how to make money, and could save it, too, without being miserly at that!"

"I suppose that you did not know that she was married?"

"Yes, I did—I found it out the other day in looking over the court record, and then I knew why young Febiger insulted me, and why the old man got mad, when I asked about her. He said she was off on a visit to her southern relations!"

"She is dead!"

"Dead? Good God! you do not mean it?"

"I do—I saw her killed! Marcus Febiger was her murderer!"

"Heaven's and earth! Why don't you have him arrested, tried—hung—curse him—HUNG!"

"It is not time yet, Mr. Queer—but the time will come—will come! She has a child!"

"Living?"

"Yes, and in the care of its father!"

"What is his name?"

"That I must withhold from you, at present. It is a name not unknown in this city, or throughout the land. But, my dear Mr. Queer, I have something for you to do—a proposal to make—which shall result favorably to your fortunes as sure as I live!"

"Name it, my dear Mr. Blacking—name it—I am your man!"

"It is that, in my absence—for I am going to seek the child and its father, and let him know what his rights are; for I have the original will of Ione's father in my own possession, besides some other documents, which will make Master Marcus howl yet—that in my absence, I repeat, you will keep your eye upon all of his movements, and report to me. I have sworn to work his ruin, and I will. I pity his young wife, but she will not stay long with him. I can perceive that she already is becoming sickened and disgusted with his rude vulgarity and drunken debaucheries!"

"My very dear Mr. Blacking, you could not put your trust in one who will be more faithful than your humble servant, even though the statement emanates from my own lips. I'll watch him as a cat watches a rat that has been guilty of cheese-larceny and other crimes! I feel more than a pecuniary interest in the matter—Sinclair was my best friend. That infernal scoundrel ought to hang—to hang, sir, for murdering his daughter!"

"Quietly, Mr. Queer—quietly! As I remarked before, his time *will* come! But our hand mustn't be shown yet. We must lessen his wealth, and get him entirely in our power before a living soul knows what we know now!"

"Yes, yes, I see!"

"And now, Mr. Queer let us go and seal our covenant over another 'sample' of the Tontine brandy!"

"With all my heart, my dear sir—with all my heart!"

"Before I go south, I will give you full directions in writing, for your instruction, how to act, and also how to address me!" said the lawyer, as they entered the Tontine.

"So do, my dear sir; so do!" replied Queer.

As he held his glass in his hand, the broker said :

"How singular, that right here, where we stand, making a covenant of united warfare against him, Marcus Febiger should have insulted me—called me harsh names, and told me that if he had been at home when I asked his father questions about Ione, he would have had his niggers kick me—me, Amasa Queer, broker, *et cetera, et cetera*, out of doors!"

"Insolent! and yet he is just the man to put such a threat into execution!" said the lawyer, tipping his glass.

"He'll never have the chance!" said Queer, as he also inverted his glass.

CHAPTER XXI.

Reader, are you scary? If not, leap with me through twenty years of the fog of time—shut your eyes, for it is a long jump—and let the incidents of those twenty years be as nought to us, except when as reminiscences, they may arise in dim and shadowy shape in future pages of our story.

Who is that lovely girl, standing there beneath the broad spreading limbs of the evergreen live-oaks, orange-blossoms in the jet-black tresses which flow glossily over her white shoulders? Her tall and stately form is *symmetry itself*; her dress, fashioned gracefully to fit, and not to improve, the form, is very elegant; her beauty never was equaled in monarch's court or peasant's cot. Who is she, standing there, so like an angel, while the dusky forms of a swarthy race are seen hovering around, gazing with respect, mingled with love and awe, upon her?

A tall and stately-looking man advances, whose face, though darkened by exposure in a tropic clime, tells that he, too, is of the pale-faced race. His hair and beard, both white as the drifting snow, are very long—his mien is serene and majestic. The red children of the forest look upon him with reverence as he passes, for they think that he holds converse with the "Great Spirit"—they know that he is a powerful Medicine-man, and they believe that, with a prophetic eye, he can look into the future. Who is he, you ask?

It is Arpiaka, the "White Wizard" and the great prophet of the Seminoles.

And the lady, she who gazes out upon the grassy ocean of the everglades, from her lovely island-home, is ONA, the cherub-child, grown into the angel-woman.

How very beautiful; her great black eyes, so full of light, yet so passionless and pure—her tall form so queenly—she looks like one made to be worshiped, not loved as frail mortals love.

"Where do your thoughts wander, dear daughter?" asked Arpiaka, as he advanced to her side. "To that glittering outside world, of which you have read so much from my books, and whose enchantments, as well as its evils, I have ever laid before you, freely, in our daily converse? Do you sigh to be in that world, mistress of the fortune which there awaits you, queen of fashion, and with your beauty, to have the things which men call hearts, cast at your feet?"

"Father, dear father, such jests are cruel! You know that there is no world which I de-

sire, but that in which you dwell. I am sure that you jest!"

"You know that I never jest, my child. But I have noted that, very oft of late, you wander away from our lodge—wander listlessly away—and stand for hours gazing out upon the green grass-fields, or upon the dancing waters, or up at the driving clouds, which in wild, fantastic forms sweep darkly athwart the sky!"

"Yes, father! Well, I am only dreaming then. You know that my mind is full of strange fancies. I love to look upon the green glades, and watch the fleeting shades which darken, fade, and brighten on the bending grass. I love to look upon the dancing waters, which, like jewels in motion, leap up to welcome the glad sunlight and the merry breeze. I love to watch the driving clouds, for they assume many a shape, which seems like a spirit-form overlooking the earth. Chide me not, dear father, for these fancies! You have given me that, which those around us have not, an education, which has taught me to know that I have a mind, and with it to study, to reflect, and to wander away into the fanciful realms of thought. Had you left me in ignorance, as they are, I should not look above their level, perhaps—might enjoy their wild sports, and even listen to the wooing of the noblest of them all, poor Osceola!"

"You pity him, Ona?" and as he said this, Arpiaka regarded her closely, as if he would read the expression of her thoughts in her countenance. But there was no change there, as she frankly answered :

"I do, sincerely, my father. He has many noble traits. He is bold and haughty among his own people, but to me, as humble as if I were a queen and he my slave. Yet there is a stern pride in his very humility. Once, and once only, has he spoken of his love; then I bade him speak of it no more, and his lips have been closed ever since, though his eloquent eye and sunken cheek have revealed how he suffers. Not so with Coacooche! He is almost insolent in his advances, though I have spurned him from me in scorn; and were you not near, even armed as I am, I would fear him. He is as wily, as remorseless, and as treacherous as a snake in the grass, which, with venomous fang, lays ready to strike from its concealment!"

"He is a bad man, and my eye is upon him!" said Arpiaka. "But soon he will have enough upon his hands to turn his thoughts from you. A war with the whites is inevitable. They have, for years, been so wronging our poor Seminoles, that retaliation is a necessity. I, who have restrained them so long, by my counsel and prophecies, can do so no longer. For my own sake, if I would still hold the power which has given me such influence, and secured to me so many brave adherents, who know no other chief than their prophet, I must urge them on, rather than keep them back, hoping, that, fortified as they are by the hands of nature, in their pathless swamps and trackless glades, they can secure such terms of peace, eventually, as will leave them in quiet hereafter!"

"You will not join in this war against your own race, my father?"

"In person no—in heart, yes, Ona. I never will desert this brave and noble tribe. When my own race wronged me, and pursued me to the death, they received, protected me. Now I stand second to none, not even Micanopee! To me they look as almost to a god. They heed my counsels, and when they think that I talk with the Great Spirit, they are awestruck and they tremble!"

"Who will lead the tribes to battle?" asked Ona.

"Osceola, the bravest chieftain of them all. Micanopee is old, and his arm is weak, but he has chosen Osceola to fill his place! But I must back to the lodge; for a council is to be held, and they will be dumb until Arpiaka speaks!"

The "Prophet" strode slowly away, but Ona did not move. She seemed lost in troubled thought.

"War is dreadful!" she murmured; "terrible in its cruelties—so say the books which I have read. I wish that I could see Osceola. I would pray him to be merciful, and I know that he would heed me!"

"Osceola is here, and his ears are open to the words of the White Dove!" said a deep-toned voice near her, and she turned and beheld him of whom she had spoken aloud.

And he looked one of nature's noblemen, that dauntless warrior, as he stood by the rough trunk of a gnarled oak, leaning upon his trusty rifle, his knife and hatchet girded to his tall, erect form, his plumed turban overhanging his high, clear brow. He was paler than the generality of the red warriors; for he was Indian only on his mother's side—his father was a pale-face—one of that race who, with Wallace, struggled for freedom, in vain, among Scotia's lofty highlands. And the expression of his countenance was noble, intellectual, and candid. *He was no "snake in the grass."*

"Osceola, you are soon going to war!"

"The White Dove has spoken the truth!"

"Will you do me a favor, Osceola?"

"I would die for the White Dove!"

"I do not ask thy death, brave Osceola, but pray the Great Spirit long to spare thee. That which I ask is, when this terrible war begins, be thou merciful. War not upon poor helpless women and children, and spare defenceless old age. Strike where warriors strike, but bid thy braves strike none but warriors!"

"The will of the White Dove is the law of Osceola!" and with a grace which many a plumed courtier could not have equaled, the chief bowed low toward the ground. Then, plucking a magnolia from a tree close by—the emblem of pure love—he placed it in her hand, and, without another word, departed to join the council of the chiefs.

"Poor Osceola—I pity, but I cannot love him!" murmured Ona, as she looked at the fragrant flower.

"Why do you not love a warrior, a great brave, then?" said a harsh voice, and an Indian, smaller in stature than the other, but well formed, and full of activity and muscle, but whose face indicated a heart full of bad passions, and a malignant, desperate, and cruel disposition, stepped from behind a neighboring tree.

"Coacoochee, a spy and a listener!" said the maiden, in a scornful tone. And, without awaiting his reply, she turned haughtily away, and walked toward her father's lodge.

"Osceola shall die, and the White Dove shall yet be mine!" he muttered, and he gnashed his teeth in anger, as he watched her receding figure.

CHAPTER XXII.

On Arpiaka's Island—for the large and fertile spot where he and his especial adherents dwelt, amid fields of corn, melons, fruits, sugar cane, etc., was regarded as his own—a grand council was being held by the principal chiefs and braves of the Seminole tribe. It was held, not now to consider grievances and petition the United States government for redress and protection, as had been the case with previous councils, but to consider how and where to strike the heaviest and deadliest blows against the forces which that government had sent into their territories, to destroy their fields, occupy their hunting-grounds, slay their warriors and make captive their wives and little ones.

Micanopee was not there; he was getting too old to leave his village, but he had sent his chieftains to counsel with Arpiaka, for he had confidence in the wisdom of the prophet, and in his devotion to his adopted brethren. Osceola, Chitte Emathla, Uchée Lajo, Kialatah, all great braves and noted chiefs, were present; and, just as Arpiaka rose to speak, Coacoochee entered, with a dark and gloomy face, a hateful sneer yet lingering there; for his heart was bitter in that he had been so scorned by Ona.

When Arpiaka rose, every warrior in the great circular lodge was still as death—their eyes, which had centred upon the council fire which blazed in their midst, were now fixed upon him, and their ears were opened to his words.

"Brothers!" said he, speaking in their own tongue, with fluency and correctness, "you have come to me for counsel! I have talked with the Great Spirit, and the words of truth and of prophecy will fall from my lips. Take heed to them. You have been forced to dig up the war-knife. It is rusty. It must be brightened upon the bone of your oppressors!"

Arpiaka paused, and sounds of approval passed from lip to lip along the dusky circle. He continued:

"Already their warriors tread along your hunting-grounds. Their great guns thunder at sunrise and at sunset over the graves of your fathers! And they hold you in scorn,

for they think you do not know how to fight; that they only understand the science of the trade. But the Great Spirit has whispered to me that you will teach them better. Yes—and his voice rose and his eyes flashed, and his whole being seemed inspired—"yes, I see your first battle. You lay concealed in the thick bushes and in the tall grass. The pale-faced army is marching through the pine-barren—their chiefs, in glittering uniforms, ride carelessly in the van, their warriors follow wearily on foot, and their big guns lumber along in the rear. They near the well formed ambuscade. Suddenly Osceola's war-cry rends the air, and he sends a bullet to the pale-faced leader's heart. And quick as lightning flashes from the cloud, each warrior picks his foe, and sends death home to him while the war-cries ring loud and far. Confused, in terror, the pale faces fall back and build a breastwork. But ere that is done, not one in ten remain alive to defend it. And they fall one by one, while no red man is touched, either by the balls of their great guns or the fire of their musketry, for the pale-faces cannot see where the red men are, and they throw their shots away! Soon the last one falls, and then the cry of victory rings high and loud from Osceola's lips. It is echoed by his braves, not one of whom has fallen. And there lay the pale-faces ready for the scalping knife? The Great Spirit has shown me this, my brothers, and it will come to pass!"*

Not now a mere murmur of approval came from that fierce and excitable band, the war-whoop, swelling louder and louder, until it was almost deafening, came from every captain's lip, and all as loudly and as wild it was echoed back from the young braves who were gathered outside, waiting the result of the council, to which they could not yet be admitted.

Again, his eyes flashing more wildly still, and looking up as if he saw all that he described, Arpiaka spoke:

"The Great Father of the pale-faces at Washington is very angry, because his warriors are falling like dry leaves before the gale. He sends an army ten times as great, and a white-haired chief, a great brave, is at their head. But my red brothers are not afraid. By a great lake they make their ambuscade. A deep swamp is before them. Behind are the waters, but their canoes are ready to bear them away when their work is done. They cut away the brush, and then make rests for their rifles, so that their aim will be deadly when the foe advances. And they send a squaw—one who has sense in her head and is not afraid—and she lets herself be taken prisoner by the pale-faces. And when they ask her where Osceola and his warriors are, she will lead them to the swamp, and say: 'There, in the woods beyond, ye will find him!' And the pale-faces will rush on, on to death and destruction! And when Osceola and his warriors are weary with long fighting, or are pressed by numbers, they will retreat across the lake in safety. The 'Great Spirit' has spoken: It will be done!"*

Arpiaka ceased, and again the wild shouts of the warriors rose upon the air.

"Will not Arpiaka go with us to the battle?" asked Coacoochee, who hid his covert malice beneath the veil of a calm countenance.

"Arpiaka can see the battle from here! He will not go; but he will tell the warriors where to go! He will remain, lest the speckled serpent come to steal his White Dove when he is gone!" said the prophet, in a haughty tone.

Coacoochee, who wore the speckled skins of the southern wild-cat for his hunting-shirt, understood the pointed allusion to himself; but he said no more, for he feared the magic power of the Great Medicine, even more than he did the angry and flashing glance of more than one warrior besides Osceola.

The latter now arose and said: "The words of the Great Medicine, our father and our brother, have put strength into our hearts! We will go and fight the men who invade our land—we will punish our oppressors! But we will fight as men. We will strike their warriors dead; but we will make no war upon their women and children! I am ready for the battle! Who is not? Osceola has spoken! He is ready to lead. Who fears to follow?"

* Read the account of the massacre of Major Dades command in any history of the Florida war.

* See history of Taylor's battle of Okochobee.

From every lip but one came tokens of approval. But on the face of Coacoochee, or "Wild-Cat," the habitual sneer, rested and he rose to speak:

The heart of Osceola has grown very tender toward women of late!" he said. "When he slays the male serpent, does he spare the female that it may breed more? Or does he save the young ones, that they may grow strong enough to bite?"

Looks betokened that the strong similes used by the wily warrior had some effect. Arpiaka saw this, and he knew that a check must at once be put upon it. He rose and said:

"Man and woman are made in the image of the Great Spirit. The tongue is crooked and the heart is black which would liken them to the serpent! The words of Osceola were good, and he who does not listen to them will be frowned upon by the Great Spirit, and evil will overtake him! I have spoken!"

most of them have perished or yielded, still Coacoochee could say no more—he stood alone in that circle, and he knew it.

The council was now dissolved, but Arpiaka took Osceola to his own lodge, where, with maps of the country before him, with the skill of a great and experienced captain, he laid out the plan of the coming campaign. From their scouts, they had received information of the number, stations, and movements of the United States forces, and from his knowledge of the tactics of military men, Arpiaka so counseled and directed Osceola in regard to his movements, that the destructive prophecies named by the former, could not fail to be fulfilled.

Osceola listened with grave attention, for he revered and loved the father of the White Dove. And he promised to obey his instructions to the minutest item.

Before he went away, Ona came out from her room with a beautiful scarf, which she threw over his broad shoulders and across his manly chest. The agitated warrior, who never trembled before a foe, could only say that the gift of the White Dove should never leave him while life was left to defend it. The scarf was crimson, and upon it was worked the figure of a dove taking shelter from a serpent beneath the outspread wings of an eagle.

Osceola knew its meaning, and though he uttered no knightly vow, full well did the fair girl know that he would defend her if it need be, while life was in him.

Then, with Arpiaka's blessing, Osceola departed to rally his warriors and prepare for action. Blood had already been shed—the war-cry had gone abroad, and there was no time for hesitation then. An era, the commencement of a long and bloody struggle, had arrived—a struggle wherein a brave and unfortunate handful, the original owners of the soil, were to meet the tens of thousands, ay, the twenties and more, of well-armed and disciplined foes, whose oft-thinned ranks would fill as fast as they were swept away.

Terrible struggle! Cruel and unjust war! Merciless persecution! Robbed of their soil, their homes destroyed, their fields desolated, the graves of their ancestry violated, their people shot down wherever they were found, hunted, too, by blood-hounds, like savage beasts—what could they do but fight to the last for revenge—nothing else was left to fight for! *

Who can blame them? Who can help but admire? With never above three thousand warriors ready for the field, and they scattered over a vast territory, for many long years they boldly fought and haughtily defied the millions of their oppressors, and though now, twenty-two years since the last war begun, a noble few remain, who swear that they will perish where their fathers died, but will not leave their native land!

Were they not "savages," these heroes—for such they are—would be held up before an admiring world as examples of valor and patriotism, more to be admired than that of the Spartan band who fell with Leonidas.

Shame, shame to the pale-faced race—even if I am one—who will thus wrong a people far more pure than themselves, who need no prisons, use no manacles, and whose vices, of the most degrading of them, have been learned from the civilized. Where does the destroying fire-water come from? In no Indian tongue extant is there an oath, or is the name of the Great Spirit—of Deity—spoken of ex-

* As an officer who served in that war, and saw too much of the wrongs which the brave Seminoles endured, the writer speaks with feeling and with truth.

cept with veneration and respect. Even in the war of the Revolution the savages shuddered at atrocities committed by tories and British, which they would not imitate. It is on the record!

CHAPTER XXIII.

Twenty years have wrought other changes than those which we have noted in our two last chapters. We will look at some other characters hitherto occupying prominent positions in our story.

Who are those two gentlemen, sitting hob and nob over a bachelor's dinner-table in a magnificent mansion on the Fifth avenue, that grand arena of upper-snob-dom, that region of retired beer-and-codfish venders, immortalised by—what? Wealth linked with the inherent vulgarity of those neither born, bred, or educated for the station which they would claim among the true aristocracy of the land—the aristocracy of mind, of proud and ancient lineage, of honor which never "stooped to conquer," or, buzzard-like, fattened upon carion, to gain strength to rise among the eagles.

Who are they? Both have Time's records written in snowy lines upon their heads, yet the furrows on their jovial faces have not "struck in" very deep, and there is a merry twinkle in their eyes, especially in those of the fattest and eldest one, which seems to say that "care has no abiding place with us!"

The silver service on the table, the elegant furniture, the luxuriant board, all speak of wealth and comfort; and the liveried servants so attentive and yet so silent while the meats are on the table, yet who at a signal retire after dessert is over and leave the gentlemen to wine, cigars, and conversation, all betoken that these two "old covies," whoever they are, knew how to live.

"Brother Queer," said the younger of the two, "do you know that to-day is the twentieth anniversary of our co-partnership, or rather our 'covenant,' made and sealed at the old Tontine!"

"So it is, I declare, brother Blacking—so it is! Well, well, how time hurries when we get toward the end of our journey! He's like a horse with oats ahead—the nearer he gets home the faster he goes!" replied the other, who was our old friend, "Amasa Queer, broker, et cetera, et cetera."

"But we have no reason to complain, brother Queer; time has not roughened us much, and by working brotherly in our respective lines, we have amassed about as handsome a fortune as any one else can afford to pay taxes on in this city of official corruption."

"Yes, yes, brother Blacking, we may say that we are comfortably well off; in fact, assert it *positively*, and without fear of contradiction, as that jolly chap, Burton, would say!"

"I wonder how that rascal, Febiger, feels now?" said the lawyer. "Let me see, his time at Sing Sing must be out. He was sent for ten years; he was not keen enough for forgery! But it gave his poor wife a chance for a divorce, which she might have had before, if she would have taken it. It beats all how some women will cling to a man, even when they know him to be heartless and criminal. But it isn't so with all of 'em! I know a case where the wife, though she knew in her heart that her husband was innocent, let him become the victim of a base conspiracy, listened to the perjuries of gamblers and courtesans, and, in his darkest hours of trouble, deserted him—left him to his fate. But he rose above his foes, and—she never has been a happy woman since!"

"Poor thing, she should have stuck to him!" said Queer, taking another glass of old wine.

"A rough-looking man at the door wishes to see you, Mr. Blacking," said a servant, entering.

"His name?"

"He would not give any, sir; but said that he must see you immediately, for his business was of very great importance!"

"Well, show the fellow up; it *may* be something that requires attention."

The servant retired, but soon returned, ushering in a fellow who looked rough indeed. His hair close-cut, and his yellowish pale face at once betokened the discharged convict, while his hardened expression and look of brazen effrontery did not by any means show that repentance had followed punishment.

"Speak of the devil, and he is sure to turn up!" said Blacking, as he motioned the servant to retire.

"Marcus Febiger, as sure as I live!" said Mr. Queer, looking with disgust at the ragged and filthy-looking being who stood, hat in hand—if the battered tile he held could be called a hat—before him.

"Yes, Marcus Febiger, free once more!" said that individual.

"What do you want here?" asked Blacking, sternly.

"Money, money!" replied the convict. "I can get no work; I don't want to steal if I can help it, for they'll jug me again, and I don't like to starve!"

"Take that and begone!" said Blacking, and he tossed a five dollar gold piece to the man.

"Yes, leave the presence!" said Queer, as he threw him a ten dollar piece.

The convict picked up the gold, and then said, in a bitter tone:

"Erastus Blacking, is this all you are going to give me? Do you think that you are now living here in clover on much that once belonged to me? Do you remember what my father did for you?"

"Yes, he led me into rascallities which it has taken a whole after-life of honesty to wipe out!"

"Honesty! HONESTY in a New York pettifogger!" sneered the convict. "Where is Barnum?"

"You had better go and see!" said Blacking, swallowing a glass of wine.

"Patience a moment, good devil, and I will!" replied Febiger. "I have a couple of questions to ask, and I will trouble you no more. Is there not some way by which I can reach that infernal scoundrel, Ribera, who, I know, has over three millions of my money, while I am penniless!"

"You have no proof that he owes you a cent!"

"No, you infernal scoundrel, no! You stole the papers, and I expect went halves with him!" thundered the convict. "What should hinder me from throttling you—you, the author of my ruin, on the spot?" And with glaring eyes and flushed face the man seemed about to spring upon the lawyer.

"This," replied the latter, coolly cocking a pistol, which he drew from his pocket.

It is astonishing how quickly some men cool down when they look into a pistol barrel and know that a steady finger is on the trigger of the weapon. I have known a raving bully, a duellist of the first order, a gambling assassin, to subside in a second, when placed in such a situation.

Mr. Febiger was calm in a moment.

"Tell me, for God's sake, where is my wife and son?" he asked. "Tell me that and I will go!"

"You have no wife! She is divorced from you, and your son has graduated with honor at West Point; and, if you have one spark of manhood left, you will trouble neither of them, nor disgrace them with your presence!"

"I was tried and convicted under another name; they do not know me as a convict!" moaned Febiger, completely broken spirited by this last news.

"She does, if he does not; you had better stick to your alias. Here are fifty dollars more; try and be something now, and, if you will do for yourself, I will do more for you!" said Blacking, somewhat affected, when he saw tears streaming down Febiger's sallow face.

"Yes, try and be a man, and we will help you! Here is a hundred more!" said Queer, with a patronizing air.

The convict took the money, and, half-choked with sobs, left the room.

"Poor devil, I'm sorry for him!" said Queer, as he took another glass of wine and lighted another cigar, for the fire in his first had been suffered to expire.

"So would I be, had I not been in my poverty and helplessness so often the object of his contempt and abuse!" replied Blacking.

"What do you think he will do, now?" asked Queer.

"Oh! I suppose he'll be like other poor devils that have fallen; probably will go to the grog-shop and drink himself into a temporary forgetfulness of the past!" said the lawyer, and he replenished his wine-glass and lighted another cigar, for his first had also gone out.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"My wife lost to me forever! No name, no honor, no friends! And penniless, except the gold insultingly cast at my feet by those who have robbed me? What shall I do? Commit suicide? Leap madly from a hateful world into the dark abyss of which I yet know nothing? No—no! I am not so mad as that! Shall I go to the accursed bowl which has already damned me beyond hope? No, no, enough of that. But I am hungry; I will go and satisfy my appetite, and then shape my course, if course there is left to me!"

Thus soliloquised the wreck of the once wealthy and haughty Marcus Febiger, after he had left the presence of the old bachelors. And he hurried away to an eating-house, where he ate almost ravenously, for the hunger of over two days' abstinence gnawed within him. After he had eaten all that he cared for, his eyes wandered to the glittering and tempting bottles upon the well-stocked shelves of the bar, but he mustered all of the man that was left in him, and paying only for his food, turned away, muttering: "I am low enough now—it shall not sink me any lower!"

Strengthened in body, but weak, ah! how weak in spirit and in hope, the unhappy man passed on, until, in a narrow street, in one of the poorer portions of the city, his progress was checked by a crowd of men, women and boys, who had gathered around a small martial band, which was playing stirring national airs, while, at intervals, a sergeant, who carried a small American flag, invited recruits to enlist, offering good pay, plenty to eat and drink, nice clothing, and a chance to win immortal fame and promotion, or death in the swamps and glades of Florida, in the ranks of the Second Dragoons—a new regiment, just formed, etc.

"Who commands your company?" asked the convict.

"Captain Fulton, of Company B.," said the sergeant. "Do you want to enlist, my fine fellow?"

"Is there a Lieutenant Febiger in your regiment?" asked the convict, trembling with agitation.

"Yes; he is our second lieutenant, just out of the band-box at West Point! But Floride will soon take the smooth out of him. Do you want to enlist?" replied the sergeant.

"Yes, after I have attended to some business. Where is your recruiting office?"

"In Centre street, near the Park. You had better go there now."

"Not yet; but I will be there in less than two hours."

"Well, let me take your name down."

"You can call me Marston," said Febiger, and he hurried away, muttering as he went, "I will be near him. I may in battle save his life, and, if I lose my own, I will lose it bravely; and, perhaps, when I am dying, he will know me and not curse his father."

Marcus Febiger was not all lost yet. There was still *some* humanity left in his breast. And so there is in even the most degraded, if it is only drawn out and nursed into life.

After leaving the recruiting party, Febiger hurried away to a clothing store, where he purchased a decent suit of plain, coarse clothing, and then he went to a bathing establishment, and thoroughly cleansed himself before putting it on. From this place he went to a barber's, where a good shave still further bettered his appearance.

Dressed as he was now, with no beard upon his face, and his hair cut short (he had told his barber that it had been done while he was in the hospital with a fever), he had no fear of being recognized by any of his former associates, or even his son, whom he had not seen since he was a young boy. After strolling around the street a while, and eating another hearty meal, and taking a couple of glasses of ale to give him strength and confidence, he repaired to the recruiting office.

There he was met by the same sergeant who at first did not recognize him, so much had he been improved by his ablutions and change of apparel. But when he mentioned the name of Marston the sergeant was delighted.

"I was afraid you had slipped your promise," said he. "But I see what you've been doing—been trimming up, so as to come into the company in shape? 'Twas an excellent idea. There is nothing like making a fair

start. If you are steady and good at drill, you'll have the *chevrons** on your arm in less than a month. Come into the back room; Lieutenant Febiger and the surgeon are in there, and we'll have you examined and enlisted in less than ten minutes, and the bounty in your pocket.

Febiger, or Marston, as we now must call him, knew not what to reply; but, trembling with agitation, he followed the sergeant, and in another moment stood before his own son.

"Another recruit, eh, sergeant?" said the able-looking young officer, as the two stood before him.

"Yes, sir, and a good one. Six feet, full, and as straight as an arrow—full-chested and good muscle. He's been sick, he tells me, and is a little pale now, but the color will soon come to his face. He is clean and neat as a pin in his dress, and that's the best signs for a good soldier!"

"A very fair specimen—good eyes, plenty of devil in him when he's woke up!" said the surgeon, walking around him, and examining "his points," as a jockey would do before he bargained for a horse.

"Your name?" asked young Febiger, carelessly.

"Frank Marston, sir!" replied the recruit, who had partially recovered his composure.

"Have you ever seen service?"

"Some, sir, afloat; but I wish to see more, and there seems a good opening in this war with the Indians!"

"Yes. Surgeon Hammerslee, do you think he'll do?"

"Yes!" replied the latter, after he had made the recruit step briskly about, punched him in the chest, and about the loins and kidneys a few times, to see if he was sound. "Yes, he'll pass!"

The oath of service was administered, the recruit signed his name in a bold, free hand, and he was fully enlisted for four years in the Second Regiment U. S. Dragoons—*Twiggs, Colonel, and Harsey, Lieutenant Colonel*.

The young officer now tendered the usual bounty to the recruit; but Marston refused it, saying that he had plenty of money, and handing the officer one hundred dollars, he begged him to keep it for him until he should need it.

"From your language, I should judge that you had seen better days," said the officer, who began to feel a deep interest, for which he could scarcely account, in the recruit.

"I have been worth millions, sir, but I hope to see my *best days yet!*" replied Marston. "But, sir, I have two favors to ask?"

"Name them, and if not out of my power, I will grant them!" replied the young officer.

"The first is, that I may not be questioned about the past. The other, that I may always remain attached to your company!"

"Both are simple, and shall be granted!" said the lieutenant. "Go, now, with Sergeant Swart, and he'll fit you with uniforms. If none fit you perfectly, the company tailor will alter them to suit you!"

The business was over, and Marston felt relieved when he was again alone with the sergeant, for it was hard to be composed in the presence of his son.

"Suppose we go out and take a glass of something strong, to wet your enlistment!" said the sergeant.

"No, sir, thank you!" replied Marston, firmly. "Liquor has done enough evil for me already! I will never give it another chance!"

"You're in for promotion, *sure!*" said the sergeant. "Though I take a drop occasionally, those get along far the best who take none at all!"

CHAPTER XXV.

A lady, middle-aged, pale, yet with much beauty in her countenance, dressed in deep mourning, sat in a well-furnished room, her appearance and attitude, for she sat in an easy "reclining chair," indicating that she was an invalid. Books upon a table within her reach showed that she was not alone, for who, with a mind, is companionless when books are near?

A knock at the door aroused her from a reverie, in which she seemed buried, and her voice gently uttered the words, "Come in!"

A young officer, dressed in the rich uniform

* The marks indicating a sergeant's rank.

of the dragoons, replied to the invitation, and hurrying to her side, pressed his lips to her brow fondly, and said:

"Dear mother, how do you feel to-day?"

"As well, my dear Clarence, as usual!" she replied, taking one of his hands between both of hers, and retaining it, while he sat down before her.

"Which, alas, is never very well, my mother!" said he, sadly.

"I am better when you are near me, my brave, my noble boy!" said she. "You cannot tell how I dread to have you go to Florida. I fear that I shall lose you forever, either by disease, or the fatal Indian bullet!"

"Ah, my mother, *ma chere mere*, dismiss such idle fears from your bosom. My country has educated me, and it is right that I should serve her in return!" replied he, in a playful tone.

"No need had you, my son, to ask an education at your country's hands. My fortune has ever been ample for all of our requirements, and now, the death of your grandfather, Allsop, has left me beyond the reach of all contingencies, so far as money is concerned! I almost wish you would resign!"

"You would not ask me to dishonor myself, mother?" he said, in a tone that was almost reproachful. "My comrades would brand me with cowardice if I resigned in wartime, while under orders to join my regiment!"

"Yet how unjustly. They cannot feel a mother's love, a mother's fears. But I will not urge you against your wishes, my dear Clarence. I feared this, when I consented, at your earnest entreaties, to let you go to West Point. But there was no war, or prospect of war, then!"

"Cheer up, my sweet mother! I will soon return, and I will win honor to my name!"

"Alas, it needs it, my son, for thou art the only Febiger who ever did honor to the name. Thy father—but no, I will not speak or think of him. He is dead to me and to you, even though he may be living. When do you go, my son?"

"Very soon now, mother—our company is nearly full. We only lack six or eight of a full complement, and Captain Fulton, who is an ardent, noble-souled Virginian, is anxious to be in the field!"

"Well, God's blessing go with you whenever we *must* part, Clarence; my prayers will rise constantly toward high heaven for your safety!"

"And you must be cheerful, mother. Do not fret and pine, but live and hope for me; grow young again, and be my own pretty mother, whose cheeks I used to pinch to make them rosy!"

"Dear Clarence, you would draw a smile from me if I were dying!"

And the fond mother pressed her gallant son to her bosom, and, though tears were falling from her eyes, she smiled through the shower, and tenderly kissed his yet unshaved cheek.

I would linger o'er this scene, for I had an angel mother once, who blessed me thus, when she gave me to my country's cause!—alas! the green turf lays heavy o'er her now—but I cannot. On, like unresisting Time, my pen must travel—for the journey is yet long before it.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A long military cavalcade was winding through the piny barrens of middle Florida. At times, when crossing thick swamps, or passing through tangled "hammocks," the line would close up and preserve some order; but, as a general thing, especially in the open pine woods, the column straggled on, its leader acting with an indifference that was almost criminal in an enemy's country.

The officers all rode together at the head of the column instead of being with their companies, and the cannon, which should have been there, was dragged lazily along in the rear. And this was because their leader, confident in the bravery of his men and his own military skill, held the Indians in contempt, and with his small force thought that he could easily march from one end of the country to the other.

Fatal confidence! It was that which ruined Braddock, and, brave leader, it may ruin thee!

Repeatedly did the experienced guide and old hunter, engaged to show them the route, ride up to the leader and say:

"Major Dade, hadn't the men better keep in better order, I have seen Indian signs for some time?"

"Captain Eagan, do you attend to your business and I will to mine," was the curt, but not over courteous, reply which he received

"If you run your head into a hornet's nest, it's no work of mine!" growled the old woodsman, more than once, when he was thus rebuked.

The day was quite far advanced, and the men began to lag wearily, and to scatter more than ever. They were moving on through an open pine barren, skirting close along by a small prairie of high grass, interspersed with clumps of the low, saw-palmetto.

"Are we not near a good camping-place, Captain Eagan?" asked the commander of his guide. "The men are very tired!"

"I'm afraid that a good many of them will lay down without camping, major!" said the guide, who was ahead, and who had halted at a little open sandy spot. "Look there—do you see them moccasin tracks? I tell you that the red devils are thick around us, yet you send out no scouts or flankers, take no precautions for the safety of yourself or men!"

"If I had known that you was such a stickler for safety, I would not have brought you from Tampa!" said the major, with a sneer.

Those were the last words that the rash and unfortunate officer ever spoke. The sound of a single rifle shot, one wild and terrible yell reached his ear at the same moment that a bullet entered his heart.

"Form, men, form! Forward with the six-pounder!" shouted the next in command, but from that moment no orders could be heard. Thicker than hail came the bullets of the unseen foe, and every officer in the van, with one exception, fell at that first terrible fire. Yell rose on yell, thicker and faster flew the missiles of death, the soldiers dropped on every hand, and yet no red man could be seen. The surviving officer, an assistant surgeon, retreated with the few men who were left, a little ways back among the pines, and, gathering up a few logs, tried to form a low breast-work, and got his piece of artillery into position. Four or five shots were fired from this, but without any effect, and in a few moments the gallant officer fell with his death wound. The rest of the men tried to fly, but were shot down in their tracks, and in less than a half-hour all lay stark upon the ground, who had been so full of life, so gay and careless before.

Then loud rung Osceola's shout of victory, echoed by his braves, and the name of Arrika was heard on every hand, for his first prophecy had been fulfilled.

Leaving to the negroes, and other followers as base, the usual work of stripping the dead, Osceola and his braves took the arms and ammunition of the fallen pale-faces, and departed to prepare for other battles.

It was soon night, and the despoilers of the dead were obliged to desist until morning. And under cover of the night, three of the men, terribly wounded, crept from amid the heap of slain, and two of them, after unheard of sufferings, reached the military outposts, and lived to tell the fate of their comrades.

They have passed away; but yet you will often hear the tale from quivering lips of "Dade's massacre"—hear it told as I, who have been upon the battle-ground, have described it.

Some historians say that Micanopee was there, but they err—he was too old, and never fired a gun in that war.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Yet another battle must be described. It was Christmas morn, a few weeks later than the fatal day when Dade perished with his command. And yet amid fragrant flowers and trees, whose green was all unfading, an army, consisting of several regiments, moved on in solid column. A portion of this body consisted of southern volunteers, hot-blooded, rash, but ill disciplined, as their after conduct showed; but the master-spirit of the command, a short, thick-set man, both "rough and ready" in his looks, held them in control.

He, the leader, rode in front with his adjutant and aids, every company officer as

well as regimental being in his place. And with him, under close guard, was a squaw, mounted upon a lithe little pony, who, after a most ludicrous chase of several miles upon the night before, had been captured by some of the mounted volunteers. Apparently very much terrified and under fear of death, she had told the leader that a large body of Indians, under the famed Osceola, was encamped upon the borders of the great lake Okochobee, only a few miles distant. And by threats of punishment if she did not, and of rich rewards if she did, the leader had wrung from her an apparently unwilling consent to guide them to the location named. Ah, well indeed did the *decoy* play her part. She was so fearful that the Indians would kill her for thus guiding their foes, that she obtained a *promise* from the leader—and Zachary Taylor never failed to keep his word—that she might leave the moment she showed them the enemy.

On moved the gallant column, the Sixth Infantry, Taylor's own regiment, in the van—compact and steady, moving all as one man. Onward until the sun was well up in the still and cloudless heavens, when they reached the borders of a long and grassy swamp, where no tree afforded shelter to advancing men, and over which the horses of the mounted force could not be taken.

Beyond was a dense hammock of oaks, magnolias, and mangroves; and therein, as the squaw said, lay the Indian camp. And smokes were seen arising from different portions of the hammock, and now and then the dusky form of a red man was seen upon the edge of it, and a yell of alarm or defiance was heard, thus proving that the squaw told the truth—the Indians were there!

She received her reward, and was allowed to depart, and brave old "Rough and Ready" deployed his men into line, and prepared for action. Dismounting from his horse, and leaving all the horses of the mounted men under guard, he marched along the lines to see that all were ready for the charge which he was about to make against an ambushed foe, whose numbers he did not know, for he never stopped to count or ask the numbers of the enemy. He only asked where they were, and then "went in to win."

Taylor's words were few, as he moved along his well-extended lines.

"Men, remember Dade's massacre, and do your duty!" was all that he said.

Then, when all was ready, his voice rang from the right, clear and loud as a bugle—"Forward!"

With a loud cheer, the gallant men moved on, the swamp at times knee-deep, and then again they sank in mud and water to their waists, or nearly so—yet on they moved, preserving an unbroken line.

In the dark hammock beyond, all was now still as death. Not a yell could be heard, not a dusky form seen now—the very smokes had died away.

"Maybe the Indians have run away, colonel," said a blue-eyed boy, who, belonging to a different branch of service, was a volunteer aid on the occasion.

"I rather think you'll sing a different tune pretty soon, youngster!" said the colonel, with a smile. "There is generally a calm before a storm!"

Steadily on toward the shadowy hammock pressed the line, until it was within rifle shot of the woods, and then indeed the calm was broken, and the storm of strife began. All along that black range of forest, from amid the sheltering trees, a sheet of fire seemed at once to run, and the bullets came thicker than hail, while the terrible war-whoop seemed to emanate from a thousand, aye, ten thousand throats. Whole platoons went down. Officers, singled out by the keen marksmen, fell on every hand. The southern volunteers, who had been at first the most impetuous, now fell into disorder. They began to retreat. In vain did their brave colonel and his gallant son strive to rally them. Both fell in the bold and almost mad endeavor.

It was a critical moment. Col. Taylor saw it—knew that all was lost without a rapid movement was made.

"Charge, my gallant *Sixth!*" he cried—"charge at double quick time—don't stop to load!"

On—on with a thundering cheer, they went toward the unseen but not unfelt foe—on men and officers dropping at every step, but at last, leaving full half of their number dead or dying in the miry swamp, they gained a foothold on the firm ground.

But where were the Indians now? None were there to meet the ready bayonet; none lay there the victims of the random shots of the troops, but yell after yell in proud triumph rose from the lake beyond, across which, in their light canoes, they were speeding in safety and unharmed. Pursuit was impossible, for there were no boats with the army.

Men call it a victory when a battle-field is won—or rather when the foe has retreated and it is occupied—but can that in truth be called a victory when all the loss is upon the side of the victors? If so, 'twas dearly bought, indeed—bought with the lives of many gallant officers and men who deserved a better fate.

Yet, on second thought, I don't know about that! They were in the wrong—invading the birth-rights of the children of the soil, trying to drive them from their once happy homes. Upon consideration, I don't know but that they merited all they received, although it would have been better that those had perished who first had started the unjust and cruel war.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Heavily fell that blow upon the United States forces, which had also suffered severely in several minor conflicts further to the westward in the territory. Col. Taylor, burdened with a large number of wounded, and ill supplied with stores and provisions, was forced to return to Tampa Bay, or Fort Brooke, as that station was then called. Meantime the United States government, ever dilatory when most haste is required, was slowly gathering troops into the territory, while the Indians, now blood tasted and maddened, were carrying death and desolation, with fire and hatchet, into all of the border settlements. Terror was running through the land. Only in the larger towns, or within the picketed forts and stations of the army, did the citizen deem himself and family safe. Plantations were deserted, and while yet the fugitive owner was in sight, he would see the smoke of his burning buildings. From beyond the Suwanee in the west, to the Atlantic coast in the east—from the Georgian Swamps on the north to the Mangrove Keys in the south—the red scouts swept far and wide, and death accompanied them where e'er they went.

But, as yet, Osceola had nobly kept his promise. Wherever he and his band went, men fell, but the women and children were spared.

And now that he had shown the strength of his nation and their skill in war, and well aware of the immense force which ultimately could be brought against him. Osceola, prudent, though brave, determined to endeavor to negotiate an honorable peace.

Trusting to the honor of the pale-face—vain trust, for when did the pale-face ever treat the red-man honorably?—he, according to their own customs, hoisted a flag of truce, which was answered in the same way by General Hernandez, at Saint Augustine, and under this tacit pledge of safety, the heroic chieftain went in to seek a conference with him.

Alas! he knew not the base treachery which awaited him—a treachery which should forever blast the names of those who concocted it and put it into execution. The brave Osceola was seized while yet his hand held the white symbol deemed so sacred among honorable men—seized, loaded with manacles, and hurried down into the deepest and darkest dungeon of the old Spanish fort at that place.

The warriors who accompanied him, among whom was Coacoochee, though meriting less mercy, were also imprisoned, but in better quarters.

What wonder that rage and indignation should fill that noble warrior's breast? What wonder that in the bitterness of his heart he should curse them that had so wronged his trust, and swear eternal vengeance against the faithless race, if once he was freed from their power, loosed from their chains! What wonder that he should chafe like a caged lion while the rust of the iron gyves fairly eat into his bones.

"Why do you not treat me as a man?" he asked of his captors.

"You are not a man; you are a savage!" was the reply.

God of Justice, what an answer! Thus

spake those who broiled Guatomozin on living coals to wrench from him his treasures—who tortured and led Montezuma to death, that they might rob him of his jewels and gold!

Who were the savages there?—the civilized, or the uncivilized—the Christian, or the heathen? Let history, with its record of blood and of shame, make answer!

Not long did Coacoochee and his wily comrades endure their imprisonment. The guards opened their prison-doors one morning, but they were not there. How they had escaped, long remained a mystery.

Heavier manacles were placed upon Osceola, though he was safe in the deep dungeon where they had confined him, and he was torn away from his loved Florida, and carried to Fort Moultrie at Charleston. Oh, desecration base and unnatural! There patriots had bled and died in defence of their native land! But now a patriot, noble as the noblest of them all, was brought there a captive, to suffer and to die! Yes, to die, for when they took Osceola from Florida, hope left his brave, proud heart, and it broke!

He died! Yes, murdered upon the funeral pyre of honor—a victim to the faithless race in whom he had trusted. We may believe, though we know not, that even in death's bitterness he remembered the "White Dove," for a smile was on his face when they found him dead. They could torture him no more.

CHAPTER XXIX.

There was another council held upon Arpiaka's island in the everglades, for Chikika and Chittee Emathla, and others, had heard with grief and indignation of the treacherous capture and base imprisonment of Osceola and his comrades. But the news of his death had not reached them, nor yet of the escape of Coacoochee. The rejoicing of the red men over their recent victories was hushed, and their faces were dark with gloom.

How to rescue him from captivity, or to force the whites to release him, was the question before the council, and, as ever, the advice and wisdom of Arpiaka was consulted.

Pardon me if I depart from the council a moment, to relate a side incident which occurred during their session. I will return to it soon.

In a sad and pensive mood, Ona was wandering along the margin of the island, stopping now and then to pick a flower, but then, listlessly plucking it to pieces, and casting the crushed leaves away. She was thinking of poor Osceola, whom she honored and pitied, though she did not love him. Her heart as yet knew no love but that which she felt for her father, and the fond memories which she cherished of her mother. Was it ever to be thus? Was no fitting mate, heaven-destined for her pure bosom, to appear and wake the hidden fire which all like her possess, to a greater or less degree? Let time and our future chapters reveal that which is yet a mystery.

The maiden had wandered to some distance away from her father's lodge, and now stood alone by the clear, silvery water, at the usual landing-place of canoes, coming from the south, or rather, from the south-east. While thus she stood, looking at her own lovely form, mirrored in the glassy water, she heard the sound of a paddle, and looking up, her eyes full upon the form of Coacoochee, who at that instant landed.

Though his usual sneer was on his face, she spoke to him, knowing that he had been captured with Osceola.

"Has Osceola been released?" she asked.

The Indian folded his arms upon his breast, a sardonic smile gathered upon his face, as he paused and scanned her from head to foot, but he made no reply.

"Good Coacoochee, do tell me, is Osceola, like yourself, free?"

"Ho! when the 'White Dove' would seek news of Osceola, then Coacoochee is good! But when he tells the 'White Dove' that he loves her, and would take her to his lodge to be his wife, then her face grows dark, and she calls him devil!" said the Indian, in a bitter tone.

"I will ever speak kindly to you, Coacoochee, but do tell me what I ask?" she urged.

"Does the 'White Dove' love Osceola?" he asked, fixing his glittering eye upon her face, so that no emotion expressed there should escape his notice.

"Yes, as a brother is loved by a sister!" she replied.

"Then let the 'White Dove' weep for Osceola—she will see him no more!" said he, while a malicious gleam of satisfaction shot athwart his dark face.

"What! dead—so noble and so good, and dead!" she moaned.

"No—better than that! He lives to suffer in chains in a dungeon; but he is dying; he refuses food, and his heart is broken!"

"Not dead? I will go to him! My prayers, my representations of his noble character will avail, and they will set him free!" cried the generous-hearted girl.

"Yes, come! Coacoochee will take you in his canoe!" said the wily villain, and his eyes flashed with sudden passion, for he thought he had her in his power, and he advanced toward her, as if he would lift her into his boat.

But at a glance she divined his passions and his vile intent.

"Stand back, wretch!" cried she, as she drew and cocked a pistol within a yard of his naked breast. "Stand back, or you die! When I want escort I will seek other than the coward who deserted his leader, in distress!"

Coacoochee's serpent-like eyes flashed with a deadly anger, but he knew that he maiden was firm and fearless, and that death would meet him before he could reach her. So he drew his canoe up on the shore, and sullenly turning away, disappeared in the direction of the Grand Council House, to which, reader, we will now return.

The proposal which Arpiaka made, after he had somewhat cheered up the gloomy warriors, and had bid them to rise superior to despair, was that they should seize some noted general or leader of the whites—if possible, Hernandez himself—and hold him, with threats of torture, if Osceola was not delivered up.

Chikika followed him.

"The words of my brother, the Great Prophet, are good!" he said. "We will act upon his counsel! And with him, I say to my brothers, be strong of heart. We have won great battles without loss, even as Arpiaka foretold. It is true a cloud is upon us now, for Osceola is not here, but we have strong arms to rescue him, or, should he perish, to strike for revenge!"

"Then prepare to strike, for 'ere this, Osceola is no more!" cried Coacoochee, advancing into the circle.

"Why is Coacoochee here and Osceola absent?" asked Arpiaka.

"I and those who were with me escaped—all except Osceola!" said Coacoochee.

"And you left Osceola to his fate?"

"We could not aid him! He was confined in a dungeon beneath the ground, and bound in chains. We were told that he refused to eat food, and was dying. But we were not placed near him, and when our guards slept, we escaped! I am here, and ready once more to fight the pale-faces!"

The wily chief sat down, and for a time there was silence in the council.

It was broken by the arrival of a runner from the north, and he brought the tidings of Osceola's death.

Then, like the low muttering of distant thunder, was heard the words of anger and of anguish breaking from those warriors' lips. And while they chanted the brave deeds of their lost chief, they mingled their threats of revenge in the wild song, and vowed that for each drop of blood that had stiffened in his broken heart, a pale-faced foe should fall. The time to ask for peace had passed—the time to trust in the mercy or the honor of the pale-face was gone, gone, never to return!

After taking advice from Arpiaka, in regard to ensuing movements, the council broke up.

Then Arpiaka returned to his lodge, where he found Ona weeping.

"What is the matter, daughter?" he asked, wondering to see tears fall from her eyes.

"Poor Osceola is dying broken-hearted in a dungeon, my father!" she said.

"No, my girl, he is free from the malice of his persecutors!"

"Free, father, FREE?"

"Yes, child, free in death—his spirit has left this, for a better world!"

"Thank God that he will suffer no more!" she murmured, and her tears ceased to flow.

"Did you love him, Ona?" asked her father.

"As a brother, I loved him—he was gentle to me, noble to every one. He was the oppo-

site in everything of that hateful Coacoochee, whom I both fear and detest!"

"Why, do you fear him, my child? Am I not ever near to protect you?"

The reply of Ona was a description of her interview with Coacoochee, when he landed precisely as it occurred.

Arpiaka's brow grew very dark while he listened to her story, and when she closed, he said:

"If the base wretch is not more careful, he shall feel the strength of my arm and know how dangerous it is to cross my path, or harbor evil thoughts against the dove of my bosom! Never stir abroad, my child, without attendants, and on no occasion, either by night or by day, do you be unarmed!"

"I never am, my father!" she replied. "And, thanks to your tuition, my aim is almost as certain as your own!"

"And closely watch your food, my child, for he is revengeful, and may, by some means, attempt to poison her whom he cannot possess!"

"I never eat until my food has been tasted by some of my pet animals, father, for I was warned of this by Osceola!"

At that moment a sharp twang and a hurtling sound was heard in the air, and an arrow struck Arpiaka full upon the breast. A low scream broke from Ona's lips, but there was no need of her terror, for the arrow fell splintered at her father's feet.

"My shirt of mail has rendered me good service!" he said, with a smile, as he picked up the broken pieces of the arrow, and cheered his daughter's fluttering heart with the assurance that he was not hurt.

But anxiety shrouded his face when he looked at a mark on the feather-end of the arrow, and saw that it was the stamp of a fish, the sign of Chikika.

"What can Chikika have against me, that he should seek my life?" said he, in a low tone. And then he bade one of his slaves to go and seek Chikika, and ask him to come and see him.

The latter was soon by his side.

"Why does my brother seek my life?" asked Arpiaka, gravely, as his eyes met those of the tall chief.

"Thy life? My brother's words are strange," said the chief, in surprise. "I cannot understand them."

"Whose arrow was this, which was sped from yonder orange grove, full pointed toward my heart, but entered not, for the shield of the Great Spirit was before me, and shattered it thus?" said Arpiaka, exhibiting the fragments of the arrow.

"It was mine," said Chikika, "but it did not go from my hand to thy breast. I lent my bow and arrows to Coacoochee but a little while since, for he wanted to shoot fish in the Glade with them, he said."

"Where is he now?"

"I saw him pushing off in his canoe but a moment since," replied the chief. "Shall I follow and slay the traitor who would have killed my brother?"

"No," said Arpiaka. "His failure shall be his punishment. He will not now dare to come near me, for he has seen that the Great Spirit protects me. I cannot be slain! Let him go; he is a daring warrior, and hates our pale-faced foes, and, though he will avoid me now, he will harass them."

"It is true; my brother is wise, and the Great Spirit is with him," said Chikika, and thoughtfully away.

CHAPTER XXX.

"A couple of gentlemen are below, madam, who wish to see you," said a servant to Mrs. Febiger, some days after her interview with Clarence, which we described in the twenty-fifth chapter. "Here are their cards."

The invalid lady took the cards and read the names of "Erastus Blacking, Esq., and Amasa Queer, broker, et cetera, et cetera."

"Ah, these are the men whose evidence and assistance rendered were of so much value to me in obtaining my divorce," she said to herself. Then addressing the servant, she added, "Show the gentlemen up."

In a short time, the two ancient bachelors were ushered in—both of them dressed with extra care, and actually looking so neat and well, that one might be pardoned for "guessing" that one or both had actually been thinking of that most desperate of follies in old-bachelorhood, matrimony.

"Excuse my rising, gentlemen; I am, unfortunately, quite an invalid," said the lady, as she, by a motion, directed the servant to hand chairs for her visitors.

"Very excusable, madam. I regret your illness, sincerely," said Mr. Blacking, with a low bow.

"And I from the lowermost depths of my heart, I assure you, my dear madam!" said Mr. Queer, making two profound bows.

"I noticed in the papers, madam, that your son had graduated with great honor at West Point," continued Mr. Blacking.

"With decided distinction—stood far above par in his class," added Mr. Queer.

"Yes, gentlemen; but, while I feel a pride in his success, I have to mourn that it deprives me of his company. He has sailed with his company for Florida, there to join his regiment, which is already in service."

"Ah, indeed; but we will hope for his safety and success," said Blacking.

"Yes, hope is a blessed thing. It has kept me up many a time, when, amid the fluctuations of stocks and the crash of broken firms, I almost began to despair!" added Queer.

"Our particular business here this morning, my dear madam," said Mr. Blacking, "was to ask if your late husband had in any way annoyed you, and, if he had, to offer you our services to get him out of the country or locked up again. He has been out of prison for some time, and called on us to learn your whereabouts, which, of course, we would not give him."

"Most decidedly not!" said Mr. Queer, taking a pinch of snuff, and tendering the box to the lady, which, of course, she declined, for she was a lady, and would not make a dirt-tunnel of her nostrils.

"We gave him quite a sum of money, and advised him to reform, and see if he could not yet be a man," continued Blacking. "At first he was rough and hardened, but our kindness seemed to soften him."

"Even to tears!" added Mr. Queer.

"If he has a wish to reform, Heaven help him!" sighed the lady. "He has not been here, and it would be useless for him to attempt to see me. I never will permit it. We were never united in heart, and now, that I am free from him, I shall remain so."

"Excellent idea!" said Mr. Blacking.

"Most excellent!" added Mr. Queer.

"I hope you will permit me to call occasionally, to inquire after your health, my dear madam?" said the lawyer.

"And your humble servant also?" added the broker.

"Certainly, gentlemen. I thank you for your kindness," said Mrs. F.

Her visitors now arose, and, with many bows, left her presence. She felt relieved then, for she was really too ill and low-spirited to enjoy any company, even of her own sex, not to speak of gentlemen who were almost strangers to her.

"A fine woman!" said Blacking to Queer, as they passed into the street.

"A very fine woman!" replied Queer, as they moved along.

"Got lots of money by her father's death," said the lawyer.

"Worth enough to stock a bank, or build a railroad," added Queer.

They now walked on for some time in silence, both seeming to be deeply abstracted and occupied with thought. At last the lawyer broke silence:

"Have you ever thought of matrimony, brother Queer?" he asked.

"Not till very lately, brother Blacking," replied the broker.

"Nor I," continued the lawyer.

"Mrs. Febiger is a very nice woman—I was just thinking of her," said Mr. Queer.

"So was I," said the lawyer.

"I think her and myself would make a capital match," continued the broker.

"Mr. Queer!" cried Blacking, in a tone sharp enough to drive a tenpenny nail home into a pine knot.

"What!" cried the broker, in a tone of wonder.

"You're a devilish old fool, sir! The lady is young enough to be your grandchild, sir. What business had you to cast your eyes where I was about to place my primeval affections?" thundered Blacking.

"That is the question which I should ask you, sir!" cried Queer, in a tone equally excited. "As to being old, I may be a year or two your senior, sir, but I'm flesh and blood, sir, not skin and bone!"

"Amasa Queer, I'll—I'll—"

The lawyer paused, though half-choked with rage.

"Well, what'll you do?" said the broker, pausing also, and looking as if he was ready for battle.

"I'll acknowledge myself to be a devilish fool, to quarrel with one who has lived like a brother with me for twenty years, about a woman who probably wouldn't have either of us!"

"And I'm another, brother Blacking. Take my hand, and let us wipe away all remembrance of these unpleasant words over a bottle of old Amontillado."

"Agreed, with all my heart, brother Queer," said Blacking.

And the two old bachelors walked off briskly, arm and arm, as cheerful as if they had never spoken a word in dispute. Would that all quarrels, with a woman at the bottom, could end as cheerfully and as bloodlessly.

But this is a queer world, and curious doings illustrate it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

After the battles of Okachobee, Withlacoochee, Ocklawaha, Lake Monroe, Jupiter Inlet, etc., etc., the United States government began to learn that even though they had but a few hundred of scorned and wronged Indians to contend with, yet *they* were not to be despised. The ablest officers were foiled and beaten; disease and death thinned their ranks; and the Indians—here, there, and everywhere—moving with wonderful rapidity and secrecy, kept continually at work. Express riders were shot down, scouts and sentinels cut off, one by one, and yet so few Indians were slain or captured, that the taking of a squaw or a couple of papooses began to be considered a matter of such importance, as to require a special dispatch to headquarters.

The forces were increased, posts established through all parts of the territory, where they really were *not* required, and the pine-barrens, which were easy to march through or ride over, and which would be the last place in which to find an Indian, were thoroughly overrun by their military scouts. The red men, laughing at such scientific warfare, retreated to the fertile islands in their great swamps and everglades, where their squaws planted corn, potatoes and melons, while the warriors, saving up their powder and lead for their pale-faced foes, speared fish and turtle in the lakes and lagoons, or with the bow and arrow brought down the turkey, scarlet-coated flamingo, the "coon," deer, and a hundred other kinds of wild game, more abundant there than in any other region on this continent.

From these hiding-places small parties often sallied out, and wo to the scouting party which passed their ambuscades. One volley from the red men would lay a dozen or two of the soldiers low, then let the rest charge upon the spot where the Indians had been, and they were not there. Search was useless and pursuit vain. If the red men in any section were closely pushed, or had got nearly out of ammunition, a white flag would be shown, and they would evince a desire to have "a talk"—come in, get presents of blankets, tobacco and whiskey, steal or buy powder and lead, and then absquatulate, leaving the duped pale-faces to "talk" by themselves.

But this could not last always. A taxed people began to ask why over eight or nine millions of dollars a year was being spent to exterminate a few hundred Indians, and used in vain. General after general was recalled, or begged to be relieved from command—Clinch, Gaines, Jessup, and even Macomb had botched their work—Armstead did but little, and it was left for Taylor and Worth to *nearly* close the war. Thus far historical and explanatory—now to our story again.

Finding that the main body of the Indians had "holed away" in the Big Cypress, and among the thousands of islands in the everglades, approachable only by boats, through intricate and almost inaccessible channels, the Second Dragoons dismounted, and the Third Artillery, acting as infantry, were, at the time of which I write, sent to co-operate with a marine and naval force in that section.

One morning, when a portion of these forces were encamped at the mouth of the River Miami, as it is called, a small, boatable creek,

which, running out from the everglades, empties into Key Biscayne Bay, near Cape Florida, a scout came in and reported Indian signs up at the head of the stream, some eight or nine miles distant, where a small party had apparently encamped and landed with two canoes. He so judged by finding two stakes to which the boats had been fastened.

"You've been sighing for a chance to distinguish yourself, Lieutenant Febiger, for some time; you can try your hand now!" said Col. Harney to our friend Clarence. "Take your favorite sergeant, Marston—who, by the way is a tip-top soldier—and twenty-five men, and try to render some account of the infernal red hounds!"

The young officer was delighted with the order, and hastened to obey it. In a very short time his detachment was embarked in six of the long, light, cypress canoes which had been furnished to the government at about ten times their value, for the purpose of using in the narrow creeks and bayous. Up the stream, which is sluggish near the mouth, but very rapid toward its head, the young officer urged his boats, himself leading the van. It was well on in the day, owing to the rapidity of the stream, before he arrived at the place where the scout had seen the signs; and here, though he had not had a great deal of experience in wood-craft, he at once saw, by the numerous spots where fire had been built, that the party was larger than the scout had supposed or reported. But numbers would not deter him after he was started, and as his men were armed with that incomparable weapon, then newly invented, COLT'S REPEATING RIFLE, he determined to follow, and not to return without an engagement.

The scout, who did not belong to the regular service, but was hired as a spy and a guide, remonstrated against this in such strong terms, that Clarence angrily bade him go back, and take care of his precious person inside of the fort.

Then, judging that the Indians had entered the everglades, then almost entirely unexplored, he boldly took the first channel which opened before him in the great "Grassy Water." And, as if to prove his sagacity, scarce had he entered it, when at a distance he saw a canoe with five Indians in it, which, however, under their skill and strength, soon disappeared again; but he followed on, not doubting but that somewhere he should come up with them. And, still more to exhilarate his ambitious hopes, a column of smoke was seen to rise from a small island, covered with trees, a couple of miles or so in advance of him, and soon it, evidently a signal, was answered by several smokes in different directions.

"We are stirring them up, sergeant!" said the young officer to Marston.

"Yes, sir. I hope we won't stir too many of them, though!"

"Why, you are not afraid of powder, I am sure! In every action, so far, you have behaved as if you set no value whatever on your life, and by your gallantry merited your rapid promotion!"

"True, sir, life is of little value to me; but you, young, with a bright career before you, you must not rashly throw your life away! You, too, sir, have *another* to live for, I have not!"

The utterly hopeless tone in which these last words were uttered, touched the sympathetic heart of the young officer, and he said:

"You musn't be so down-hearted, sergeant; you have much to live for—may yet receive further promotion! You speak truly—I have some one to live for; it would break my mother's heart if I were to fall, but I must stand my chance among the rest!"

"Will you do me a favor before we land on yonder island, lieutenant?" asked Marston.

"Yes, if within my line of duty!"

"Then, sir, please lay aside your frock-coat, with its straps and buttons, which make you too conspicuous a mark for the enemy's sharpshooters, and put on this plain jacket, which I brought purposely for you!" said the sergeant, unfolding a parcel.

"You are very thoughtful, Marston, and it would be unkind of me to refuse your request!" said Clarence.

And he took off his coat and put on the jacket, which did not now distinguish him from the other men.

They approached the small island rapidly, but the smoke which had been raised lasted only a few moments—then died away.

With commendable prudence, a virtue always allied to true valor, the young officer scattered his boats, and landed with caution. The island, which did not contain more than ten or fifteen acres, was a beautiful spot. A fine grove of large live oaks covered most of it; the under-brush had all been cut away, and corn, sweet potatoes, pineapples and bananas had been planted there, and were now in full perfection. Indian signs were plenty, and the remnants of the fire of sticks and damp moss with which they had made their signal-smoke,* was discovered, but not a single living being could be seen or heard.

It was now nearly dark, and Lieut. Febiger determined to encamp there for the night, for, though other and larger islands were in sight, and not very distant, it would have been utterly useless to try and follow the sinuous channels in the dark.

Posting sentinels thickly around, and hauling his canoes ashore, and with them forming a temporary breast-work, to use in case of sudden attack, the young officer prepared to pass the night. A small camp-fire, hidden from distant view by bushes cut and stuck like a picket around it, was lighted, and over it the soldiers made their coffee and cooked their supper, improving their opportunity by appropriating corn, potatoes, fruit, etc., from the Indian fields. They had brought no tents—in that climate none were required.

Thus, before dark, all, except the sentinels, were as comfortably encamped as they could have been at the regimental head-quarters. And the latter, when relieved every two hours, enjoyed the same comforts which their comrades had before them.

Two there were in the little camp who did not feel much inclination to sleep—one was Marston, the other the young lieutenant, who felt the responsibility of his station. Strict orders were given to keep silence in the camp, and, as there was scarce a zephyr to stir a leaf overhead, all was very still. The lieutenant had wandered down to the edge of the island, upon the side toward a larger one, which seemed to be distant not more than four or five miles. While he stood there, the faint *tum tum* of an Indian drum was heard, the sound seeming to come from the large island, and, once and a while, shrill yells could be heard in the same direction.

"They are dancing the war-dance. I shall have hot work to-morrow," muttered the young officer.

A sigh, deep and heavy, as if it came from an overladen heart, fell upon his ear, and that was the first intimation he had that any one was near him. On looking around, he saw, by the pale light of the moon, the form of Marston standing, like a statue, by the side of an oak, where he had been when the officer approached the spot.

"Why, sergeant, I supposed that you had turned in," said the lieutenant.

"No, sir, when one has but a few hours to live, it were folly in him to waste them in sleep," replied Marston. "I heard the noise made by the savages, some time since, and came down here to listen and reflect."

"All right, except your idea that you have but a little time to live. Banish all such ideas from your breast, sergeant. Armed as we are, we are equal to more than a hundred white men, let alone a lot of ignorant savages. Dismiss all thoughts of death from your mind, my brave fellow!"

"Sir, I cannot," said the sergeant, in a choked voice. "I could not if I would, I would not if I could, for life, long since, became to me a burden. I have a presentiment that to-morrow will be my last on earth."

"Let us hope not. I have long noted that some secret sorrow seemed to prey heavily upon your mind, and have felt a deep sympathy for you."

"God bless you—God bless you!" and, for a few moments, sobs choked the utterance of the man, who, though a father, with a parent's yearning love in his bosom, dared not, even then, with the presentiment of approaching death laying like lead upon his heart, make himself known to his son, lest that son should despise him.

* By these moss-made signal smokes, which would suddenly send a dense column up in the air, the Indians, during the war, communicated the approach of the government troops to each other, and thus were prepared to attack or evade them. Like magic, I have seen a dozen of these telegraphic smokes rise in various quarters in a few moments.

Nobly had he striven to redeem the manhood which almost had died out during his career of dissipation and crime—with what success, his promotion and the respect entertained for him by his officers can best give proof.

At last he became calm again, and, drawing a sealed package from his bosom, he handed it to Clarence, and said :

"Sir, if I fall to-morrow, open this, and it will tell you the history of one who, in his latter brief and unhappy days, tried to redeem the errors of his early life. And should one tear of pity fall from your eyes when I am gone, should *you* think of me kindly, and bear my last, almost hopeless, request for forgiveness to one who is named therein, then I shall not have lived or died altogether in vain."

"Your request shall be complied with," said Clarence. "But cheer up, my man. To-morrow we will have a merry fight, and whip out a score or two of these red rascals, and go back with honor to the regiment!"

"*You* may, but *I* shall not. But excuse me, lieutenant; I will go the rounds, and see if the sentinels are on the alert. We cannot be too watchful when the enemy are so near."

"True, sergeant. I will go and take an hour's sleep, if I can get it. Let me be woken, if I sleep, each time that the guard is relieved."

"I will, sir," replied Marston. "But I think we will not be disturbed here to-night. If we *are*, it will be just before daybreak, when men are generally supposed to sleep most soundly."

"We will be ready for them; but I think they will await an attack from us," said the young officer, as he walked back to the campfire, and, wrapping a blanket around him, cast himself upon a tired soldier's couch—the ground.

And the sergeant went his rounds, murmuring as he went: "Noble, noble boy! If I can but die for him, and he return to tell his mother that I preserved his life at the cost of my own, then, perhaps, she will forgive me, and shed a tear for me when I am gone!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

The sound of the Indian drum, and the yells which had reached the ears of the lieutenant and his sergeant, came from the island of Arpiaka. The party which had encamped near the head of the Miami was a portion of Chikika's band, headed by himself, who had been out to see what the forces below contemplated, and who, now that danger was so near to Arpiaka in his chosen island home, could not be induced to leave him without protection, at least, until it was settled whether the whites would venture into the unknown intricacies of the glades. If they did, he was not only prepared for resistance there, but afar off, in the very centre of the Great Cypress Swamp, he had prepared another home for his adopted brother, which the pale-faces might seek to find in vain, for it was a trackless way which led to it, through many a dark and winding creek, through many a blinding bayou, amid tangled mangroves and cypress, which would check the progress of anything human, except an Indian, and bother everything else, except a serpent or an alligator.

It was Chikika, in person, who had detected the advance of Febiger and his small detachment—his canoe which the latter had seen. The chief had been so near that he had counted the number of the enemy, and he had made the alarm signals before spoken of. From Arpiaka's island, where some seventy or eighty of his best braves were assembled, he had watched the movements of the young officer, when he landed and encamped, and he judged rightly, that the lieutenant would defer an examination of the larger island until morning.

He had made his report to Arpiaka, and they together had determined to defend the island, and to utterly cut off and destroy the party, so insignificant in numbers, that had thus come to "beard the lion in his den."

To effect this, Arpiaka, whose knowledge of military matters was extensive, had shown the chief how to construct breast-works at every accessible point of landing, so that when the whites advanced, the Indians, fully covered, could receive them, with deadly aim, at point-blank fire.

After this was done, Chikika had assembled his warriors to dance the war-dance, with the words, and the recital of their former deeds

of valor, stimulating them for the coming struggle.

Ona stood upon the fanciful little porch which fronted her father's lodge, gazing out through the trellised vines upon the wild scene, looking at the dusky forms, which, hideous with paint, danced and leaped like demons around the fire which had been built in the large square, in the centre of the encampment. Their frightful yells, as they brandished their weapons of death, rung harshly upon the ear, for her associations had not destroyed the woman-nature within her pure bosom.

"My father," said she to him, as he stood by her side, "you surely will not mingle in the strife which you anticipate?"

"I shall use no weapons against my own race, dear child," was his reply; "but I must encourage my brave defenders with my presence, and strengthen them with my counsel!"

"Cannot these men be made captive, instead of being slain?" she asked again.

"That were indeed a folly!" said he. "We have not more than enough to provision ourselves—no warriors to spare to guard them; and were they released, they would guide overpowering numbers here to destroy us. No, for our own safety, they must perish; and it is but a just reward for their temerity. They invade our homes for the purpose of destroying us. In this war, so far, they have neither shown mercy or honor; they merit no mercy at our hands!"

"It may be all right, my father, but this shedding of human blood is, to me, very terrible!"

"Naturally so, my dear child; yet there are cases when it must be done. Now, we act not offensively, but strictly in defence of our homes and our lives. But, dear Ona, you had better retire. Do not stir from the lodge, in the morning, upon any account. Go now, for I have matters to arrange with Chikika, and would see him alone!"

The sweet girl kissed her father's lofty brow, and retired within the lodge—not to rest, for she could not slumber while the shrill war-cries were ringing in her ears.

And Arpiaka walked slowly forth to meet Chikika.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The night passed on, the moon went down, and the day dawned—but no alarm was given to disturb the camp of the young lieutenant. The sun rose unclouded, and a cool and gentle breeze whispered among the leaves overhead, and rustled away amid the tall grass of the glades.

Several small smokes, rising from the larger island, gave evidence to the officer that Indians were encamped there, and in such strength of numbers, that they did not deem any concealment necessary. But so confident was he in the courage of his men, and the great superiority of his repeating fire-arms, that he felt no hesitation about attacking them, and he bade his men take matters easy, and get a comfortable breakfast, at the same time announcing that he should move immediately after upon the larger island. The men, who were much attached to their young leader, who was kind, though strict in his discipline, cheered him heartily, and hurried through their morning meal, and prepared for work.

Marston seemed very cheerful, and moved about with an alacrity which induced the young officer to think that he had conquered his dark forebodings of the previous evening. He had not learned enough of human nature to know that a cloak of gaiety often covered the coffin of hope—that some men are ever "saddest when they smile."

The sun was about an hour high when the camp was broken up, and the canoes again launched. After very carefully inspecting all of the arms, and seeing that each man was properly supplied with ammunition, the lieutenant gave his final orders, and bidding them follow where he led, embarked, and headed his boat for the larger island. The channel, though crooked, was quite plain; but they moved on with caution, lest at some sudden turn they should unexpectedly be met by the Indians, in their canoes, and receive a fire before they were prepared for it.

Thus nearly two hours elapsed before they came within long rifle shot of the large island. Upon it, now, everything was still as death. The smokes had disappeared, and not a sign

of life could be seen upon the shore, as they slowly and steadily approached.

"I'm afraid they have given us the slip, Marston!" said the officer.

"No danger of that, sir; we will soon see and feel them, too! Have you got the pack-age which I gave you, sir?"

"Yes, it is here, inside my vest!" said the officer.

"If my advice is not intrusive, sir, I would scatter my boats, so as to land in an extended line, if I were in your place, sir. The enemy cannot then so concentrate their fire, as now!"

"You are right, sergeant. I am obliged to you!" said the officer, who, unlike some fopplings of the "button," whom I have known in my "day and generation," had the good sense to listen to and profit by advice, even if it did come from a subordinate.

The line of boats was extended in front of a smooth beach, back of which a skirt of low hedge-like bushes arose, and then the order was given, in a voice loud and clear as a bugle, by Clarence, to "land!"

With a hearty cheer the men dashed on; in a moment they were close to the beach, but then the ominous silence was suddenly broken, and from the bushes covering their front a terrible fire was opened, which seemed almost as one discharge. More than half of the men fell dead at the first fire, and others were wounded, but the impetus of the boats drove them to the shore.

"Charge!" shouted young Febiger, as he leaped, unhurt, from his boat, followed by Marston, who had not yet been touched.

But another volley, apparently from a reserved force, rung upon the air, more men went down never to rise again, and both Marston and his leader were desperately wounded.

"You had better retreat, sir, or you are lost!" cried the sergeant.

"Never, so help me God, never!" cried the young officer. "My poor men, my poor men!"

Then firing rapidly into the bushes, though he could not advance, he cheered the few who yet lived with his shout, and bade them do battle to the last.

But loud above his shout arose the fierce yells of the Indians, and their unceasing fire was kept up, and very soon only two of all that gallant band had life left in them. They had fired their last shots, and were too weak to load again, when the Indians, headed by a chief of immense size, by whose side strode a pale-faced man with long, white hair and beard, dashed aside the bushes with which they had masked their breast-work, and rushed on to finish their bloody work.

The sergeant, who was even then dying, dragged himself before the form of his helpless leader, and, looking wildly at the white-haired man who advanced, recognized him, and cried:

"Arthur Livingston, for God's sake, save my son—save Clarence Febiger, if you are a man!"

"My God—is that Marcus Febiger?" cried Arpiaka, for he it was whom the dying man had called Arthur Livingston.

"All that is left of him—Clarence—Clar—"

He turned, cast one look of fondness upon his bewildered and astonished son, then fell back dead upon the blood-stained earth.

"Hold—for your life, strike him not. He is my prisoner!" cried Arpiaka, as Chikika was about to sink his tomahawk into the lieutenant's brain.

The chief obeyed, while his warriors, with mad shouts, hastened, as usual, to scalp and strip the slain soldiers. Arpiaka, who now supported the fainting form of the wounded officer, caused several of his slaves to bear him to his lodge, where, with consummate chirurgic skill, he staunched his wounds, and dressed them as well as he was able. He hoped that the wounds were not mortal, although they were very dangerous, for Arpiaka was not naturally hard of heart.

After he had administered an opiate to the still insensible officer, he went out to meet Chikika, to consult him upon their future action, first, however, telling Ona, who had seen the wounded officer brought in, to watch over him, with an attendant, and to notify him should the sufferer awake.

The battle was over, and the presentiment of Marcus Febiger had been fulfilled—he slept his last sleep, and could err no more.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Will the young chief of the pale-faces live?" asked Chikika, when Arpiaka rejoined him.

"It is doubtful!" replied the other. "His wounds are many and dangerous? Care and skill may restore him—the Great Spirit only knows!"

"Why does my brother seek to save his life?" asked the chief. "Is he not our enemy?"

"Yes, but I will make him our friend. I spared him because he is a cousin to my child. Is my brother angry that I should do so?"

"No," replied the chief. "My brother is wise and good. Who shall question his acts or dispute his will?"

"Did Chikika note well the face of the man who threw himself before the young chief and asked for his life, though he sued not for mercy for himself?"

"I did!" replied the chief. "He was a great brave, and did not fear death!"

"That man was the young chief's father, I expect, from his words," continued Arpiaka, "and it was he who slew my wife, and who drove me to seek refuge with my red brothers!"

"Does my brother want his scalp?" asked Chikika, quickly thinking, in his nature, that the trophy would be valued by Arpiaka.

"No," replied the latter. "Give him decent burial; I do not wish to look upon him again. Bury his comrades also. They fought like brave men, and their bodies should not be left to the buzzard and the crow!"

"My brother's will shall be done!" replied the chief. And then he continued: "Is it not likely that the pale-faces, who are many in their camp by the shore of the great salt lake, will come to look after these men when they find they do not come back?"

"Yes," said Arpiaka, "and it will be best for us to go very soon to our other camp in the 'Great Cypress,' where they can never come. Then you can move out with small parties, and cut off their detachments while they search for us, make smokes to mislead and make them weary, and make them think that we are many, and roaming everywhere!"

"My brother's words are wise and will please the braves! Chikika will have them ready whenever my brother is prepared to go!"

* * * * *
Clarence Febiger lay upon the couch where Arpiaka had placed him, breathing faint and softly, yet still with good sign of life. His face was very pale, and the long, dark lashes lay like a fringe of silk upon his white cheek. His curling hair hung in tangled clusters around his lofty forehead, and his small white hands lay clasped upon his bosom, which rose and fell very gently with his suppressed breathing. He looked very beautiful to Ona who had never before seen a young man of her own race, for he was infinitely more handsome than any of the warriors whom she had seen, not even excepting the noble-looking Osceola.

Having sent her attendant from the room to bring some cool water, with which to lave his heated brow, should he awake, she gave way to the new and unaccountable sympathy which filled her bosom, and moistened her great, dark eyes, and she bent over him, and kissed his white cheeks and hot brow, tenderly, while she murmured:

"So young, so beautiful and brave; he must not die!"

Her kisses seemed to bring some sweet memory to the sleeper's tranced brain, for he murmured something, while a smile seemed, like sunlight on snow, to come and go upon his face. She bent down her head to catch those words, while a strange fire flashed in her eyes, and a flush reddened her cheek.

How strange it is that the moment which gives birth to love, also brings jealousy into existence.

She listened, and a glad smile came over her face, for his words were: "mother, dear mother!"

"I, too, had once a mother," she murmured, and the hot tears fell from her eyes down upon his face, as she kissed him again and again.

But she blushed deeper than ever, and started back, as his eyes slowly opened.

"Where am I? Dead, and in the presence of an angel?" he said, in a low tone, while he looked in wonder upon the surpassingly beautiful creature before him.

"You are living! I am only a woman, and grieve that you are so sadly wounded; but do not talk, I will go and call my father!" said Ona, gently, and she hurried out.

"Heavens! She speaks English, talks like a woman, pities like a woman, but she looks like an angel. Where can I be?"

"With a friend—one who will save your life, if you will but be quiet, and not give yourself up to excitement!" said Arpiaka, entering, and giving him another opiate, more powerful than the first, which had an almost immediate effect.

CHAPTER XXXV

When Clarence Febiger again awoke to consciousness, he was many miles from the island, where his brave men had fallen, and where he had been wounded. Arpiaka, well knowing that a search would be made for the missing party, and probably with a force too large for the strength of Chikika's band, had left his island-home, and gone to the secret fastness in the "Great Cypress," where he had no fear of being found, and if discovered, could defend himself against almost any odds.

It was on the fourth day after this removal, when he permitted the wounded officer to be restored to full consciousness, having kept him in a partial state of stupor by the use of anodynes. A dreamy vision of passing through flowery fields, and again through dark and noisome byways, where the grunt of the alligator, the hiss of the serpent, and the scream of the startled bittern fell alone upon the ear, lingered in his bewilkered brain. And a picture, too, of loveliness, of a pitying angel, who had hovered about him, bathing his hot brow with water, and murmuring many a word of tender sympathy, was in his mind.

When he woke, he found himself reclining upon a most comfortable couch, in an apartment dimly lighted, but airy and comfortable. The first thing which his eyes rested upon was the same fairy form that greeted his eyes on his first return to consciousness, after being wounded, but the moment that he opened his eyes, and tried to move, she rose and glided from the room.

While yet he wondered who or what she was, the tall and stately Arpiaka entered, looking, with his snowy hair and majestic beard, like some weird magician of the olden time. His pale face was grave, but its expression was not unkind, as he advanced, and felt of the young officer's pulse.

"Where am I?" asked Clarence.

"In safety, Clarence Febiger!" said Arpiaka.

"Who are you, sir, that knows my name?"

"Your friend, at present, and will be, until you are well, and I can send you back to your people—then, if you again take up the sword against those who never wronged you or yours, then I am your enemy!"

"Did I not see you among our enemies when my poor men were shot down, and I was wounded?"

"You did, but your name reached my ear, and I spared you, saved you from those who were ready to take your life!"

"Am I alone left of all my detachment?"

"You, alone!"

"And Marston, the sergeant?"

"Died as he proclaimed your name, and his relationship to you!"

"Relationship to me, sir? What mystery is this?"

"By his name of Marcus Febiger, I have long known him, and have the bitterest cause to remember him, whom you seem only to have known as Marston, the sergeant!"

"Marcus Febiger, my father, whom for years I have not seen, and Marston—"

"Were one and the same, sir! But you must not talk much until you gather strength!"

"Oh, sir, explain all to me—this is terribly strange—it seems unreal!"

"No more unreal than your wounds—yet very strange, I acknowledge! When you are strong, as in a few weeks you will be, then I have some questions to ask you—but for the present, rest!"

"This package!" said Clarence, feeling that which Marston had given to his charge, "may explain something. I pray you read it to me!"

"It has saved your life!" said Arpiaka, pointing to a bullet, which, having pierced it, dropped from the inside of it, as he drew it from the inner pocket, where it had been placed.

"Please to read it to me, sir!" said the young officer.

"It may contain secrets, family matters, of which I should be the last to know!" said Arpiaka.

"Sir, your treatment of me shows that you are a friend. Were you not, such has been my course through life, that I have never had a secret to conceal, a thought which I dare not utter before all men!"

Thus urged, Arpiaka broke the seal, and read as follows:

"CLARENCE: Dear Clarence, chide me not, now that I dare to call you that, for the seal of death will be on my brow before you open this package, and this will come to you as a voice from the tomb—from the grave, where, hidden from the sight of man, lays all that is mortal of him who can err no more—where his evils may be forgiven, even if they are not forgotten! You are my son—much as I have disgraced your angel-mother, you are my son! For months I have, under your own eye, striven to redeem my lost manhood, my only hope and prayer to die bravely near your side, and with my last effort in life, to save you from peril of death. That accomplished, death will have lost all its bitterness. Your mother then may forgive. I have erred madly and desperately, but to my last errors, I was driven by wrong and persecution! But of that, no more. One thing in regard to your future. I am aware that wealth is yours, through your mother, yet, there is a Spaniard, named Rafael de Ribera, in Havana, who honestly owes me nearly, or quite, three millions of dollars. I have not the proof, but a lawyer named Erastus Blacker—in death I forgive him the wrongs he has done me—has the proof and when he knows how, and where I died, he may relent, and give the son, what he would not yield the father!"

"I know the wretch, Ribera!" said Arpiaka, as he paused, "and I also know the lawyer, and when you depart I will send a letter by you to the latter, which will ensure you justice. He is my business agent!"

"Who, in God's name, are you?" asked Clarence.

Arpiaka made no reply, but fixing his eyes upon the manuscript, resumed his reading:

"I have done much wrong—wrong which cannot be forgiven on earth, even if it is in heaven. Blood is on my soul. The blood of the innocent and the beautiful!"

Arpiaka paused, and groaned—"He spoke the truth—he spoke the truth! The blood of poor Ione lay heavy upon his soul, even in death!"

Then mastering his emotion, he read on:

"Should you ever meet Arthur Livingston and his child, tell them that your father died repentant of his evil, and prayed for forgiveness with his last breath!"

"God forgive him—it is not for us to deny that which our Maker grants to every penitent!" said Arpiaka.

"Arthur Livingston? Was it not the name that he addressed you by, when he fell, sir?"

"It was! When I was known in the busy world, it was my name, and one which I never dishonored; but here, among my red brothers, I am known as Arpiaka!"

"The Great Prophet of the Seminoles?"

"Such they call me!" said Arpiaka, and he resumed the reading of the manuscript again:

"Clarence, farewell! I have watched you closely, and in you I see no speck. You are a mirror untarnished, a diamond without a flaw. Redeem the honor of the name which I have disgraced. God aid you and protect you. Your unhappy father,

"MARCUS FEBIGER, alias MARSTON."

Arpiaka folded up the paper and returned it to Clarence, who gazed upon it in silence, with a tearful eye. After a while he spoke:

"He was a bad man to my mother—wild, reckless, and abusive when I was a child—and he was afterward sent to prison for crime, and my mother told me to forget him, and never to utter his name. But still he was my father, and his last days were his best!"

Noticing that the young officer was faint, Arpiaka poured out a glass of wine and gave it to him.

He then said: "I will leave you to your rest, now, for your rapid restoration to health depends much upon your avoiding agitation."

"One question, before you go, Mr. Livingston!"

"Call me Arpiaka, sir—let the name of Livingston be forgotten, even as I have forgotten the world!" said the latter, sternly.

"Your pardon, sir—I will not again offend. The question I would ask is, who was the beautiful creature, so like my ideal of an angel, that was by my side when I awoke?"

"She is my daughter, and from pity has assumed the duty of nurse to you, sir! But beware how you speak to her of beauty, sir, or let her into a knowledge of that heartless outside world from which you came, lest you make a deadly enemy of one who would be your friend! She has never known the world, is soul-pure, and heart-free! I would have her remain so! Do you understand me?"

"I do, sir!"

"Then, so long as you act with the honor

which becomes a man and a soldier, I shall not prevent her attendance upon you, for it seems to give her a pleasure, for she has a heart as tender as it is spotless; but one word beyond the mark I have laid down, and you will see her no more. Now rest!"

The tone and look of Arpiaka was very serious while he uttered these words, but not harsh. After he had spoken, he retired.

"Soul-pure and heart-free!" repeated Clarence, as soon as he was alone. "And so beautiful!"

But soon the young man, wearied from his late excitement, dropped to sleep. And then, with a step as noiseless as that of the evening dew, when it sinks to rest upon the bosom of the rose, in came Ona, and gazed upon his face, so full of manly beauty—gazed all breathlessly, with a wrapt look, as if she had found something to worship there.

A wreath of orange blossoms was entwined in her black hair, and she looked very lovely, though somewhat pale with long watching

CHAPTER XXXVI

When, on the second day after his departure, Clarence Febiger did not return, the officers of his regiment began to feel anxious about him, especially as the prudent scout, to save himself from the charge of cowardice, which his desertion of the officer implied, had rather multiplied the number of Indians which his second examination of the signs at the head of the river indicated.

In truth, Col. Harney had threatened to hang him up for leaving the party, but the scout had got too used to threats from that source, to take them much to heart.

Three, four days passed, and still young Febiger did not return, nor did any tidings come from him. The younger officers, who were very much attached to him, now began to demand loudly to be permitted to go in search of him. The commanding officer at last assented, and a strong detachment was detailed for the duty.

Starting early, on the morning of the fifth day, the party soon reached the head of the little river, and at once pushed ahead in their canoes to the first island where Clarence had encamped. Here they found his signs, but they evidently were some days old.

They then hurried on to the large island, which, like the other, they found deserted, but here they also found that which struck sorrow to their souls.

Inside of one of the breast-works, thrown up by the Indians for defence, they discovered a large mound of newly heaped earth, and upon a cross erected over it was inscribed these words, written in a heavy hand, either with red chalk, or painted with blood:

"Here rests all that is mortal of those
who came to rob the red-men
of their homes.
Let the pale-faces remember their fate,
and let us alone.
Go back, or a like fate awaits you!"

Disbelieving that all could have thus perished, the officers had the mound opened. One by one the scalped and disfigured bodies were lifted out of the shallow grave, until not one remained. All were counted and recognized, but that of Clarence Febiger.

"Poor fellow—him they have reserved for the torture!" said one.

"Heaven help his poor mother, of whom he so often spoke with devotion!" said another.

"He may have escaped!" suggested still another.

"Never would he have left his men while life was in him!" said the first speaker. "He was true as steel, and knew no fear!"

The bodies of the men were reinterred by their sorrowing comrades, and then the enraged soldiers commenced the work of havoc and destruction upon the island. The fields of corn and fruit were destroyed—the houses, some sixty or eighty in number, were set on fire, and everything laid desolate, except such portion as was reserved for their encampment for the night, for it was too late to go further on that day.

The smoke of the burning dwellings had not been in the air ten minutes, before signal-smokes were seen in a dozen different directions, communicating to the Indians far and near the fact, that their enemies were out in their blood-hound hunt after them.

"We can at least find a chance for revenge, for I go not out of the glades until we take

scalp for scalp!" cried the noble Fulton,* who was in command of the detachment, as he pointed toward the smokes. "They will rally for a fight, I think," he added, "and by the Lord they shall have enough of it!"

He then gave orders to post sentinels, and form the camp so as to be ready for a night attack, should one occur, intending to make an early start in the morning, and to try and bring the enemy to action somewhere.

The night passed on very still and quietly, and when it was almost dawn the commander was afoot, waiting only for light to make his preparations for an early breakfast and a start.

Suddenly a shot rung on the air, then another and another, and the shouts and death-groans of the sentinels, which were posted around the camp, told them that the foe had been awake and moving while they slept.

"To your arms men, to your arms!" shouted the brave officer.

The men sprung to their feet in a hurried and confused mass, for the terrible war-yell rung in their ears, and while thus clustered, a killing volley was poured in upon them, slaying many, wounding more.

And then, like a storm, quick-coming and passing on like electric fire, the sound of shot and yell ceased, all as suddenly and when the survivors were formed, and charged in search of the enemy, not an Indian could be discovered. They had done their work, and fled—fled without the loss of a single man. When the day dawned, not an Indian could be seen, nor even a trace found by which they could be pursued. The only proof, and it was a dreadful one, which showed that they had been there, was the cold corses of the dead, and the writhing bodies of the wounded, who lay stretched upon the ground. The blow had been as heavy as it was sudden. Nearly one-third of the force was slain or disabled. The commander had not the power now, even if he wished, to advance; his wounded must be taken back, where they could be properly cared for, and his force was too small to divide.

The survivors buried their dead with sad hearts, raising a new mound beside that which had been reared by the Indians over Febiger's even more unfortunate party. And then Fulton, with a heavy heart, gave orders to re-embark, and turned his face back toward the headquarters of his regiment. His mortification was intense, yet he was not to blame, for he had used every precaution for defence, and his sentinels were properly posted. But, during all of that war, the Indian policy was to fire suddenly from an ambuscade, and then retreat; or, upon a sleeping camp, and then fly. And seldom did they lose a man, while the whites invariably lost more or less, and generally officers were more singled out than private men.

In one case, that of the brave Captain Russell, of the Third Artillery, he received eleven balls, while not another man was touched in the boat in which he was killed. The Indians at that time fled, without the loss of a man.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Weeks passed on, and Clarence Febiger had so much improved, that he could walk out a short distance from the lodge of Arpiaka, and as he had given his word of honor to the latter not to attempt to escape, but to wait until Arpiaka could safely send him to the camp of the United States forces, he was permitted to do so, without any other attendant than Ona, who seemed never to tire of his company, and who would sit for hours and listen, while he read from some favorite author, out of her father's small but well-selected library. Books which she had read and re-read, were new to her, when their contents came upon his mellow voice. Arpiaka might have known how dangerous this was, if he wished her to be still kept heart-free, but he was constantly occupied with chiefs, who came to him with news, or asked advice and counsel, and he did not seem to notice it. Perchance he trusted implicitly to the honor of him whom he had cautioned. Yet he should have remembered that love is blind—blind to honor, prudence, everything but the object of its infatuation.

And perhaps he had not cautioned her, deemed her so all unused to the thought of

such a sentiment, except as she felt an attachment naturally for himself, that he considered it unnecessary.

He should have known that love is of sudden and spontaneous growth; that, as the seed blown with the thistle's down is carried to spots considered almost inaccessible, so love, in its mysterious wanderings, takes root where it is least expected.

And in spite of all caution, regardless of danger, drinking in her glorious beauty through his enraptured eyes, Clarence had learned to love, nay more, to idolize her!—to feel that he could not live away from her side! He had forgotten the call of duty; not a thought of his comrades and friends seemed to enter his mind; and of his mother, he only spoke when Ona alluded to her.

But he did not tell his love, or at least did not speak of it in words, though by many a heaving sigh, by many a speaking glance, by many a flush coming and going on his hot cheek, she could see that he felt that, which, in honor to her father's wish, he dare not utter.

And we could not conceal, if we would, the fact that she was no longer heart-free. She had pitied him from the first, and sympathy is so near akin to love, that its wedlock is almost an unnecessary form. Yes, Ona loved Clarence very dearly—she did not know how much, until she heard her father tell him, one day, that as soon as he was a little stronger, he should be sent back to his people. And though she checked the emotion which sent the blood from her cheek back to her quivering heart, the words seemed like a death-knell to her every hope.

That evening, when they walked out in a magnolia grove, in whose fragrant shade they were wont to sit, she turned to him, and abruptly asked, as she looked him in the eye, seeking there a readier answer than from his lips:

"Do you wish to go back to your people?"
"I did once—but I do not now! I am very happy here!" was his answer.

"Then why do you think of going?"

"I am your father's captive—I must go where he sends me!" he answered, sadly.

"You shall not go! I will not let him send you away! I would die without you!" she cried, with passionate energy, and she clasped one of his hands in her own, and kissed it ardently.

What, after hearing such an avowal, would have been his answer, we cannot say, for a dark shadow came between them and the rays of the setting sun, and as they looked up they saw a dark-browed Indian chief, and five stalwart warriors, rushing upon them.

"Coacoochee!" cried Ona, and her wild shriek rung loud upon the air.

"Yes, and Coacoochee has come for the White Dove, and a pale-faced lover's scalp!" yelled the savage, as he sprang forward.

But his conquest was not to be made without a struggle. Clarence, though still weak, was as brave as a lion, and withal cool and active. Bidding Ona to fly to her father's camp for aid, he snatched the dagger from her belt, and threw himself in the way of the advancing warriors, dodging a blow aimed by the chief with his hatchet, and the next instant striking the dagger home to the hearts of two warriors, who endeavored to close with and seize him. The next instant he grappled Coacoochee, who, with a mighty effort, cast him to the earth, and then rushed after Ona, who had fled toward her father's camp, shrieking for help.

And help came, not a second too soon, for the villain's grasp was almost upon her, when the tall form of Chikika, and twenty or more other warriors, was seen bounding toward him.

"The 'White Dove' escapes this time, but she shall yet be mine!" he yelled, as he turned and fled toward his canoe, which lay near where Clarence had been stricken down, and still remained insensible from the shock.

His pursuers were close behind him, but as his fiery eye rested upon the prostrate form of the officer, a yell of fury burst from his lips, and, drawing his knife, he plunged it to the hilt in the breast of the helpless man. He had no time to take his coveted scalp, for Chikika was very near, and his terrified warriors were already in the canoe. One bound, and he was with them, and they were speeding away as fast as they could paddle, leaving two of their number by the side of Clarence, like him, bleeding, but unlike him—dead!

* Captain F has since died—his remains are at Richmond, Va. He was a gallant officer.

Ona followed close upon the footsteps of Chikika and his braves, and casting herself down upon the body of poor Clarence, moaned and sobbed as if her heart was breaking.

"I am saved, but he whom I love more than life, is lost—is lost!" she cried.

Clarence heard her words, and though he believed with her, that he was dying, he smiled, and whispered, "Ona, dear Ona, your words are worth dying for! I am happy now, for I could not live without you!"

She heeded not that the eyes of Chikika and his warriors were upon her; she did not rise even when she heard her stern father's voice, but wildly kissing his pale lips, and trying with her white hand to staunch the blood flowing from the ghastly wound, she moaned her grief and her love in rapid, half-incoherent words.

"Rise, Ona, rise, and let me attend to his wound!" said Arpiaka, almost sternly.

"Oh, my father! he has saved me from worse than death; but he will die, he will die! But I too will die, for I cannot live without him!" she cried.

A dark and gloomy frown was upon Arpiaka's brow, but he gently raised Ona from her position, and examined the wound of Clarence.

"The knife has not reached a mortal part," said he; "if I can staunch the hemorrhage, he will live!"

A low cry of gladness burst from Ona's lips, and she sobbed no more, for those words had wakened the dying hope in her fond, pure bosom.

Taking a scarf from her neck, and using a handkerchief for a compressure, Arpiaka made a temporary bandage for the wound, and then bade four of the strongest warriors carry him carefully to his lodge, while he with Chikika walked slowly behind, drawing from Ona a full account of Coacoochie's daring attempt and the desperate bravery of Clarence, who, weak as he was, had slain two armed warriors with her dagger, and struggled hand to hand with the fierce chief himself, who was accounted a match for the first warriors of the tribe.

"He has acted nobly in this case, but basely in another, and you must see him no more!" said Arpiaka, quietly, but firmly, to his astonished daughter.

"In what has he acted basely, my father—he, who is all honor, the soul of all nobleness?"

"Although I warned him not to attempt it, on his peril, he has won thy love!"

"Won my love, my father? It was no fault of his! I gave it him the hour we met—long, long before he unclosed his eyes from his death-like sleep; long before the music of his voice fell upon my ear! He has never spoken of love to me—never sought my affection! Freely I gave him that, which he never asked for—my whole heart's boundless love!"

"Silence, girl! Remember only that his father slew thy mother!"

"You have told me yourself, father, that Clarence was not born, nor his father wedded, when that cruel deed was done. Wherefore, then, blame him for that which occurred when he was not in existence. I am nearly three years his senior, am a woman, with all of a woman's heart, throbbing madly in my bosom. Oh, my father, if you love me, do not break that heart. Do not drive me from his side, but let me nurse him as before! Remember that for me he suffers, for me his life is imperilled!"

Tears rolled from her beseeching eyes while she spoke; and softened, yet still stern, Arpiaka said:

"If thou wilt speak to him no more of love, and do but thy duty as a nurse, I will not hinder thee! Dry up thy tears, my child!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The anger of the commander of the forces at the mouth of the Miami, was fearful, when the remains of the last detachment returned, and reported their loss, and the fate of that which had been led by Clarence Febiger. Imprecations from that source were too common to be unexpected, or seriously heeded; but they came with an ill-grace from a man who, but a short time afterwards, was himself surprised through utter carelessness, and all of his command, excepting only one man and himself, cut off.

After venting his abuse upon the officers who had just returned, and upon the memory of Clarence Febiger, supposed to be slain, he swore a terrible oath, that, with all the force which he could muster, he would enter the everglades, and, dogging the Indians from island to island, and into their secret hiding places, would shoot and hang every one whom he could find, refusing quarter in every case. But loud as were his words at that juncture, he was too prudent to put his threats into execution until his force was increased, for the two last lessons which his men had received, had taught him that the Indian foe was not to be despised. Leaving him waiting for expected reinforcements, we will look a little further down the Florida Reef, and draw the curtain aside from a tragedy of real occurrence, to show that Chikika and his braves were not idle, and understood the *civilized* and custom-sanctioned law of retaliation which has ever been practiced by nations at war. Their houses had been burned, and their crops destroyed, and they thought that a little fire and destruction by way of reprisal, might teach their pale-faced enemies more caution.

About ninety miles to the south-west of Cape Florida, was a small islet of ten or twelve acres, occupied by a man, whose history, if all were revealed, would throw romance into the shade. He was reported, while a mere boy, to have ran away from Staten Island with a sloop, about the size of a market boat, belonging to his father; but the particulars of that marine elopement were never fully understood, for he was always as *mum* as a "Know Nothing" when the subject was alluded to.

One thing was certain, that, many years before, when the difference between wrecking and piracy was so minute as to be scarcely discernible, he appeared on the reef with a small sloop, and entered into the business with an earnestness which indicated that a fortune, and nothing short of a fortune, was what he aimed at. His crew consisted of a half-dozen youngsters like himself—not one of them over twenty years of age, a negro cook, black as his own kettles, and forty-seven degrees uglier than any *Caliban* that ever was made up for Shakspeare's *Tempest*—and a very "strong-minded" young lady some older than himself, whom he had picked up on his way out, in Charleston, and who occupied the position of his mate, although another mate was on the sloop's muster-roll. In after years a question arose, which could not be so settled as to entitle her to property left by him, whether or not her shipping articles had been legally drawn up and blessed with priestly ceremony; but at any rate, she appeared on the reef at that time, as Mrs. Jake Housman, for that was the name of our hero.

It would fill a volume, were I to relate one twentieth part of the stories told of the early career of this daring young wrecker on the reef, who, though the most reckless of his class, was seldom *wreckless* when there had been a gale in the gulf heavy enough "to put them on." Tales of "false lights," of vessels stripped, of crews saved, yet who never reached the shore, were told, yet, as they were tales and traditions, coming down from lip to lip, they must be received as such with many an inch of "allowance for stretching," the more especially that the hero of them has gone to his last reckoning, and is no more accountable on earth.*

At the time when we bring him into our story, Jacob Housman had become a *very* wealthy man. He had made Indian Key his wrecking station, and there was no better on the coast. In front of him was Alligator Reef, where many a brave craft has piled up her "bones;" from his look-out cupola, the eye could cover the Hen and Chickens and Tavernier Shoals to the north-east, and the Key Vacas, Duck Key, American and Sister Key Shoals to the south-west.

He had built between thirty and forty neat cottages on the island, a large and splendidly-furnished house for himself, several warehouses, and a large and well-stocked store, in which could be found everything from rum to cologne water, a jewsharp to a sheet anchor, a monkey-jacket to a satin dress—in fact, "anything and everything which could be called for"—as his chief clerk, Daddy Somerindyke, used to say. His houses were ten-

* He was killed in 1840, while boarding a wreck, in a heavy gale, and died, as he had lived, with a curse on his lips.

+ So named, in consequence of an English sloop of war, of that name, being wrecked there, many years ago.

anted solely by people in his own employ, for—with one exception—he was never known to let any one live upon the island who was not, literally, soul and body, at his command.

That exception was the celebrated naturalist, Doctor Perrine, whose labors and discoveries in the field of science were much valued, and who, in the very height of his usefulness, was cut off, as will shortly appear.

At this time, Captain Housman owned several of the finest wrecking sloops on the reef, and could not have been worth less than three hundred thousand dollars, and probably more, and was very rapidly "piling up" dollars upon this heap. And having thus introduced him, with a perspicuity which truth required, we will ring up the curtain on the tragedy.

Upon a balmy night in the delicious summer time, when the breeze from the Gulf Stream came gently in and kissed the trees and flowers on the little islet, the inhabitants retired, in peace and quietness, to slumber, without a fear in their bosoms; for, from the commencement of the war until then, no Indians had been known to approach the Key, although, before the war, they often came to Housman's store to buy powder and lead, and calicoes and paints.

Doctor Perrine, with his interesting family, consisting of an amiable wife, two very beautiful and intelligent daughters, and a young son, occupied a house close on the water side, fitted up with an observatory, and arranged for his studious pursuits. Near him was Mr. Howe, the postmaster, and but a hundred yards or so distant was the residence of Housman. The cottages, which, fortunately, were not all occupied at the time, formed the fronts of a hollow square, with neat little gardens in their rear.

All was still, balmy, and dreamy, that night, and on until about two o'clock in the morning. Then, had sentinels been on the alert, gazing out upon the moonlit waters, they would have seen a long, dark line of canoes coming, like a shadow, from the inner bay toward the main land—coming so still that the dip of a paddle in the flashing water could not be heard, nor even the ripple of the sharp prows as they severed the waves. But no watchful sentinel was there to warn the inhabitants of their danger.

The canoes reached the shore one by one, and soon their dusky crews, to the number of over two hundred well-armed warriors, stood upon the land, with Chikika at their head. In a low tone he gave his orders, directing each party to creep in silence to its destined post, while he, with some of his trustiest men, proceeded to the store, in which he knew there was a large quantity of liquor, which he wished to destroy, lest some of his men should get at it and lose themselves in drunkenness, for he knew that his work must be quickly done, and his fastness in the Big Cypress regained, for there were limited States forces very near at hand, and pursuit would inevitably be made.

It was nearly dawn—not lacking, at most, over an hour—when all was ready, and the fearful war-whoop rung loud and wild from the lips of Chikika. In an instant, it was echoed from the stentorian lungs of two hundred braves. And, at the same instant, fire was applied to nearly every one of the cottages at once, though Chikika yet spared the store and larger houses, intending to plunder them before he destroyed them.

Up from their dreamy beds sprung the affrighted people! Some of them rushed instantly out, and met death on the threshold of their own doors; others shrank back in terror, and perished in the flames. How any could escape is alone a mystery.

Captain Housman and his lady, with no garments on but their night robes, sprung from a back window of the bedroom as the Indians burst in their front door, and, creeping through a grove of fig trees, gained the water-side; whence, supporting his wife, the bold wrecker swam over channels and waded over coral reefs, which cut his flesh in to the bone, until he reached a hiding-place upon a mangrove island. A brother of Mr. Good-year, the great India-rubber man, escaped almost by a miracle, having been, at one time, immersed in a cistern beneath a burning warehouse.

But the fate of poor Doctor Perrine and the sufferings of his family deserve our attention now. At the first alarm he sprung from his bed, and aroused his wife and terrified

children. As yell after yell broke upon their ears, death, terrible and inevitable, seemed to be their doom. But the doctor's ready mind instantly hit upon a temporary hiding-place for them. Back of his house and communicating with it, was a boat-wharf, and strong stakes had been driven down all around it in the water, to form a pen in which to keep living turtles. Directing them to crawl out in this pen under the wharf, and hide there up to their necks in water, he said that he would go up to the cupola and address the Indians in Spanish, which he spoke fluently, for many of them understood it, and he hoped to make terms with them, as he was a non-combatant, and had no connection with their enemies in arms. Hurried off only in their night robes, the wife and delicate daughters, and the brave little boy crept out into the water, and soon they heard the husband and father speaking from his cupola or observatory. But a yell from the Indians drowned his voice, which they never heard more. The crash of broken doors, the yells of the plunderers, and the crackling of flames came rapidly one after the other.

Intense as was now their mental agony—widowed and fatherless in an instant—they were doomed to suffer yet a horrible torture. As the flames of the burning dwelling rose, the heat became great, blistering their fair and delicate skins, and rendering them the most intense agony. When at last the wharf, under which they lay, took fire, it became evident that they must be roasted slowly to death, or else escape from their hiding-place. But how to escape when all was as light as day, and the merciless savages on hand all around to slay every one whom they found, was a question which seemed to defy a solution.

But now the man in young Perrine exhibited itself. He could see a boat which was moored at a little distance, and to this he swam, keeping as low down in the water as he could to avoid observation. Detaching the boat from its mooring, he swam slowly back, that it might appear to be drifting in. Soon it was by the little wharf, and the scorched and blistered mother and sisters, who had only preserved life by frequently immersing themselves under the water, crept into it, and the young hero, while they lay concealed in its bottom, swam away with it in tow, and soon was beyond the reach of the savages, who were now engaged in plundering the store, where a large quantity of powder, lead, knives, axes, muskets, and rifles, as well as calicoes, cloths, tobacco, etc., attracted all their attention. If memory serves me right, that boy-man was only eleven years old, and his heroism deserves a bright page in the annals of history.

Day dawned at last, and revealed only blazing buildings and blackened ruins, while the Indians were loading their own canoes, and several boats which they found at the key, with their plunder.

A gallant young officer, Midshipman Francis Key Murray, was on Tea-Table Key, some two miles distant, with only ten or twelve sick men, who had been left there in a temporary hospital. Although only four or five of these were able to pull an oar, he forced them into a large barge, which mounted one gun, and made them pull within a quarter of a mile or less of the island, where he opened such a fire upon the enemy, that they hastily took to their boats and canoes and left, after returning his fire, and severely wounding some of his men. He kept up his fire until his gun recoiled overboard, and then he devoted himself to picking up the fugitives who had escaped destruction. He also instantly despatched a light sail-boat, with a couple of men, to the United States schooners Wane and Otsego, up the reef, for assistance, and the latter, of which the author hereof was then acting first lieutenant, was soon underway, and arrived at the scene of desolation while the ruins were yet smoking, and the bodies of the dead lay sweltering in gore or scorching by the fire.

It was a pitiful sight to see those who had escaped, scorched and blistered by the heat, their limbs cut and bleeding from the sharp reefs of coral, most of them nearly naked! Yet it was a merciful and wonderful Providence which spared their lives. Our sheets and blankets were at once given to the ladies to make temporary clothing with, for they had not saved anything, and our own wardrobes were opened to the men. Meantime hurried preparations were made to pursue the

Indians, and soon a boat expedition was in their wake. But they had too much start, and gained the everglades in safety.

When we returned to the blackened island, it was occupied by the marines of the naval expedition, under command of a brave but eccentric officer, Lieutenant Thomas Sloan, whose remains now rest in the burial-ground attached to the Naval Hospital near Brooklyn. He had gathered the remains of the murdered people together, and buried them in a large grave, at the head of which a board was placed, and upon it, with his usual oddity, well-meant, however, he placed the following inscription:

"Here lays all the mortal remains of a numerous lot of men, women, and children, who were cruelly butchered by the bloody Indians on this island. May the Lord take a liking to their souls!"

Poor Sloan, he was a gallant Kentuckian beloved by all who knew him. He never recovered from the hardships and sufferings of that sickening war, as not one in ten did who endured them, and fell all too early into the hands of unsparing death.

This chapter, which has been strictly historical, has been given to the reader, more to show the strength, skill, and cunning of the so-called savages in that war, than because it had a direct connection with other of our characters than Chikika and his braves.

With this explanation, I will now return to those whom, I presume, the reader feels the most interested in.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Slowly, yet more rapidly than before, Clarence recovered from the wound which he had received from the hand of Coacoochee. For now, though neither of them spoke of it, except through their ardent glances, he knew that she, whom he so worshiped in his heart of hearts, returned his love, with a passion fierce as flame and all as pure. And his life, seeming a part of his love, grew strong with the hope that she would yet be his, his own forever—that he could return, not alone when he went back to his mother, but bearing upon his breast a flower, fit to grow in Paradise, a jewel more precious than ought else on earth.

He soon grew so strong that he could again walk forth, leaning upon her arm, but he could not now, as before, go unobserved with her into the shady recesses of the flowery groves, for with the good excuse that Coacoochee might be hovering near, Arpiaka never let them move outside of his lodge without a guard.

He was busy as ever, for Micanopee had been taken and sent west, and though not so lineally, yet he was regarded literally as the head of the nation, and all expeditions were made only after his advice had been asked, and his directions given. He it was who counseled the attack upon Indian Key, for he knew how sadly the Indians needed ammunition, and that plenty could be got on that island. He it was who sent out small parties of fleet young warriors, to attack the most distant posts and settlements, so as to lead the soldiers away from his own immediate vicinity, and to make them believe that the Indians were ten times as numerous as they really were. Strange, yet true, that his long residence with the red men, and his remembrance of wrongs inflicted on him and his, made him hate the pale-faces full as bitterly as the fiercest of the warriors.

It was several weeks after Clarence had received his wound, and Chikika had just returned in triumph from his attack upon Indian Key, when the young officer, who had just returned from a walk with Ona, was met by Arpiaka in his lodge, who addressed him on the subject of his return to his people:

"You are strong enough to travel, now, Lieutenant Febiger!" said he. "I will redeem my promise, made to you long since. You shall go back to your people. I will send you with a guard, who will leave you as near the fort as they can go, with safety to themselves, and you can then tell your people that wronged as we are, we can sometimes be merciful and generous!"

The cheek of Ona grew more white, if possible, than the magnolia, which lay nestled in purity, on her soft bosom, when she heard these words.

Clarence, too, turned pale, and trembled, but made no reply.

Arpiaka did notice the appearance of both of them, and marked their agitation, but he appeared not to, but continued his remarks:

"When you see your mother, you may tell her that more for her sake, and for the sake of the little link of blood between you and my lost Ione, I spared you, and that Ione's murderer is no more! If you think, after all that has passed, that you can still war upon these poor people, who only ask for peace and quiet on their native soil, I shall extract no pledge from you not to do so; for you will have to resign your commission, or obey orders from your superiors."

"Never—never will I raise a hand against a Seminole, except as I did with Coacoochee's brave—in defence of life, or one whom I hold more dear than life!" exclaimed Clarence, looking first at Arpiaka, and then at his daughter.

The father frowned when he heard his closing words, and in a harsh, hasty tone, said:

"Your memory is either very treacherous, sir, or else your honor is held all too lightly! Have I not bidden you not to speak of love in her ears?"

"Chide him not, my father. Let it suffice that, in dividing us, you will break both our hearts!" said Ona, in a low tone—almost a sob.

"Silence, girl—speak when you are spoken to!" said Arpiaka, sternly. Then, turning to Clarence, he said: "Young man, be ready to go on the morrow."

"I do not wish to go," said Clarence. "Let me be a captive still: I will not try to escape; I will hunt with your hunters, and be no burden to you!"

"Will you go to the battle with our warriors, and fight your former comrades?"

"No, sir, no! Arpiaka would not ask that!" cried the officer. "And if he did, I would die before I would comply with his wish!"

"You would not do it even to win his daughter for thy bride?" and Arpiaka closely scanned his face, while he waited for a reply.

"No, sir, not even to win her whom I worship, forgetting even my God!" replied Clarence.

"It is well! I do not ask the sacrifice! Be ready to go to-morrow!" said Arpiaka, and then he strode away from the room.

For a moment, Ona and Clarence stood and looked at each other, then tearfully rushed together, and embraced.

"Never, never, will I leave you, my angel! I will die here, for life without you were a load too heavy to bear!" said Clarence.

"Go, brave, dear Clarence," said Ona, "but you shall not go alone. I will be with you, for my heart tells me that it owes no duty but to you. You are my love, my very soul, my life, my all!"

And her burning kisses were thrown like scattering rose leaves upon his brow, his eyes, his cheeks and lips.

"But your father will use force to prevent it! You will be kept back, and woe, woe to me then!"

"No—go you, as if you had nerved your heart to part with me forever. Manage to make your departure as late in the day as possible. Then when night falls, alone in my light canoe I will follow, for well I know each winding turn of the channel, and before the night is passed, I will be beyond your camp, and will meet you when the warriors leave you. Though they will not see me, I will not lose sight of you!"

"Angel, I hope, yet I tremble for your safety. Should your father pursue, you might be taken, but worst of all, should you meet Coacoochee, who is prowling, we know not where—"

"I will be so armed that our next meeting will be the last for him! I am no child, Clarence!"

"No, my brave, my beautiful, my own Ona, no! You have the spirit of a thousand warriors, and hope once more gladdens my heart. I will do as you direct!"

"Do not let your joy or hope be seen in your face!" said Ona. "Like me, appear sad and sorrowful, the better to disguise our intentions!"

Again the lovers renewed their kisses and their vows, and then separated, each to wear a mask, a new thing to their artless and truthful natures.

CHAPTER XL.

Different in numbers and equipment, was the third expedition which started from the mouth of the Miami, for the everglades, from either of the unfortunate ones which had preceded it. Heavier boats, more men, thoroughly armed, and well provisioned for a lengthy cruise, were those which formed this "army of invasion." And the better to conceal his approach, the commanding officer determined to enter the glades in the night, and to move as little as possible in the day, and thus to surprise the Indians on their islands, and to secure guides, whom he intended, by torture or bribes, to force into leading him to the strongholds and camps of their tribe.

Ah, little did he know of the stern integrity of that noble race—of their honesty of heart, their courage and their fortitude. But he was doomed to learn it, ere he had passed through that campaign, or even much more than commenced his trip.

Coming stealthily to the small island, where Clarence had first encamped, the van-guard found an Indian canoe at the landing, and creeping quietly up, at a camp-fire in the bushes, found there, and secured a warrior and his squaw, and two children, who had encamped for the night.

Extinguishing the fire, the commander halted his men there, as it was nearly morning, forbidding any of them to show themselves outside of the bushes, and also hawing his boats hauled up out of sight, so that no straggling scout should observe them.

When the day dawned, he had the captive warrior brought up, and finding that he spoke English, demanded if he would show him where the villages of Chikika and other chiefs were.

"No!" said the Indian, sullenly.

"I will give you a rifle and new blankets, and plenty of tobacco and whiskey, if you will!" said the commander.

"Me no want 'em!" replied the Indian.

"I'll shoot you, if you don't!"

"Shoot! me no 'fraid. Look there!" and he showed ten notches on the handle of his scalping-knife, each counting one for scalps taken from his enemies. Me pay for life long ago—s'pose me see you first last night, I count one more. Good scalp, yours, red like fire!" and the Indian smiled, grimly.

"You cursed Indian dog, I'll hang you!" shouted the infuriated officer.

"Hang, damn, hang! Me only die once!" said the warrior, scornfully.

"Bring a rifle here—I'll see what stuff he is made of!" shouted the commander.

The order was obeyed, and by his directions, one end of the rope was thrown over the limb of a live-oak, and the other fastened in a slipping noose around the warrior's neck. His hands being bound behind him, and his feet tied together, he could not have offered resistance, if he would.

"Run him up!" said the officer.

In a moment the brave fellow was swinging in the air. Full as long as he dared to let him hang, and yet keep life in him, the officer kept him suspended, and then gave the order to lower him away, and bade the surgeon to resuscitate him, so that he could again be questioned.

It was with considerable difficulty, that by bathing his temples and throat, and administering liquor, the poor fellow could be brought too, but at last he was once more conscious.

The commander bent down, and, looking him in the eye, asked, in a sneering tone "How do you like hanging, you red dog?"

"Me like 'um much! How you like whiskey?" said the Indian, fiercely, as he spat the mouthful of whiskey, which the surgeon had given to him, full into the face of the commander.

With a yell of rage the officer drew his sword, and, forgetting what he wanted to force out of the prisoner, drove the sword home to the very hilt in his bosom.

"Ugh! Long knife much good! Big coward, you!" grunted the Indian, and then, without a groan, he fell back, dead!

The squaw and children looked on in horror, but in silence, while the husband, father and protector thus suffered and died.

To them the commander now turned, swearing that they, too, should perish. And a man who could whip a negro woman to death, in Tennessee, would not be likely to spare a poor, helpless squaw, in war-time; but mer-

were there, officers and gentlemen, who would not permit such an outrage to be committed without remonstrance and opposition. He knew it, and was content to utter only curses and threats.

Ordering the body of the Indian to be hung up, as a terror to others who might come that way, the commander now bade his men take rest, as he meant to remain there until night would again conceal his movements.

He also posted men up in the umbrageous tops of several of the loftiest trees, to watch for smokes upon other islands, and to detect any boat which might approach.

Thus we will leave him, for the present

CHAPTER XLI.

As she had wished, evincing great reluctance to go, and exhibiting the most profound sorrow, Clarence delayed his departure all that he could upon the day which was set for his return.

Ona did not make her appearance, but taught to be artful by the exigency of the case, she seemed to be utterly lost in grief, and locked herself in her apartment. But in truth she was preparing to follow him to whom she was already wedded in heart, and to whom she was ready to entrust life, honor and everything. Her preparations were simple, yet there were things which she did not wish to leave behind. One was a packet which her father had given to her care long before, and which he, at the time, told her contained the proof of her birth, a copy of her grandfather's will, and other papers which would be of great value to her, if he should be cut off, and she should ever go out into the world again. And she also took, after loading them carefully, a pair of fine pistols and a large dagger, which she easily concealed beneath the Indian costume which she wore. And some rare and costly jewels and money, too, she selected, for she knew that such things might be useful in a world where gold is the god of two-thirds of its people.

Tired with the various excuses and delays which Clarence made, Arpiaka, who had given him the letter that he had promised, introducing him to Blacking, and advising that worthy to give him the proof to require his rights from Ribera, told him, for about the fortieth time, that the warriors were ready, four of them in a canoe, to take him out to the fort on the Miami.

"May I not say farewell to Ona, before I go?" asked the young man. "I have waited to see her, but all the day she has kept within her room!"

"Yes, and wisely. Parting words will make both your hearts heavier. I grieve for you both, but you are young, and young hearts are forgetful. Had your father not slain her mother, I would not thus separate ye, but that bar of blood lies between ye, and it must not be passed! I have spoken! Go, and my blessing go with you!"

"May I not take the arms which I wore when I was captured?" asked the young officer. "Perchance I might meet the faithless Coacooche before I reached the fort, and if I were unarmed, he might be more than a match for me!"

"It is true; your request is but reasonable. It shall be granted to you!"

And Arpiaka went and brought Clarence his two revolvers and his sword, and at the same time put a purse of gold in his hand, saying: "Should you resign, you will need money before you reach home!"

Clarence would have refused this, but Arpiaka would take no refusal, and he was obliged to accede to his wishes.

Looking, but in vain, to see Ona, although he had the utmost confidence that she would follow him, he at last shook hands with Arpiaka, and with a heavy heart stepped into the canoe, which was to bear him away from the island where he had first known the bliss of love.

The bliss of love! Ah, to some, who know not change, over whom no cloud hovers, how blissful is love! Yet others there are, whose love, too strong almost, is like madness. It is such that it is never satisfied, for, while possessing, it ever fears the loss of its treasure. There can be no love, that is, love without jealousy and fear, and, alas! no torture is there in hell below, or on earth above, which is so keen, so killing as jealousy. But excuse the digression.

The warriors chosen by Arpiaka to escort Clarence back to his regiment were such as the latter would have picked, had he been permitted his choice. They were honest and trusty braves, and they looked upon him not as a captive, but as a late and honored guest of their great prophet. And they honored him, too, for his courage, that greatest of virtues in an Indian's eyes, for they had seen him when he had struck down the warriors of Coacoochee.

The retreat of Arpiaka was soon left far behind, and when night came on, they encamped upon an island out in the open glades, beyond the swamp. After cooking their provisions and supping, the Indians laid down by their camp-fire to rest, so as to be ready for the long row of the next day. But Clarence could not sleep; his thoughts, hopes and fears all were with Ona.

The moon was shining brightly, and he knew that if she escaped she would pass the island before the dawn of day, and he hoped to see and make some sign of encouragement to her.

We will leave him, thus, upon the watch, and, for a moment, return to her. After Clarence had gone, and his form could no longer be seen, Arpiaka went to the door of her room, which was fastened, and called to her. For some time the only answer which she gave him was her sobs. At last, however, she replied to his entreaties to come forth, and said:

"Let me grieve! My heart is full, and it will break if I do not weep! Let me, at least, be left alone! I will not be so sad tomorrow!"

"Perhaps 'tis best; grief so fierce will be the less lasting!" said he, as he turned away.

Three hours later, a tall and slender form stole away from a back window of the lodge, and, gliding down to the landing, unseen singled out a small and gracefully modelled canoe, and springing into it, pushed from the bank. For a little time she scarcely touched the paddle to the water, but let the canoe, with gentle impetus, drift down the dark lagoon, for it was night now, and doubly dense in that narrow channel, overhung by the gloomy cypress. But as she gained a little more distance from her father's camp, she plied her paddle with more strength, and glided on more rapidly.

CHAPTER XLII.

Clarence, whom we left watching for the passing of her whom he loved so entirely, began to tremble when the night was far advanced and morning dawn was near at hand, for she came not, and he feared that her escape had either been prevented, or that she had been pursued and overtaken. The night was cloudless, and a full moon's light made everything almost as visible as day, therefore she could not pass the island in the channel unobserved.

"If she comes not, after I have resigned, I will return, and either perish by her side, or Arpiaka shall yield me her hand!" he murmured, as he stood by the water-side at the landing-place.

But a flush rose quickly to his cheek, and he almost ceased to breathe, for he thought he heard the dip of a paddle in the rippling waters to the west. A few moments more and the thought became a certainty, for he could distinctly hear the sound, though as yet the tall grass concealed the approaching canoe.

"She comes—thank God, she comes!" he murmured. "She is mine now, and no power on earth shall ever wrest her from me!"

A moment later, and he could see her tall, graceful form as she stood up in the after-end of the canoe, plying, with easy strength and firmness, the light but springy lance-wood paddle.

Suddenly she stopped! Did she see him, and intend to speak? No, her eyes were fixed upon something beyond her, and, as she ceased to urge her boat on, the quick ear of Clarence detected the sound of paddles coming from the other direction.

From her attitude and look, as well as his own misgivings, he felt sure that he saw danger to her ahead, and, without attempting to awaken his escort, who slept at their camp, a hundred yards or more back in the bushes, he stepped into the canoe, and pushed out from the shore, loosening his pistols in his belt as he did so.

At this moment he saw that Ona was turning her canoe, as if to fly from some pursuer, and, to make her aware of his presence, he called to her in a low tone, yet sufficiently loud for her to hear. She recognized him, and, with a cry of joy, turned the prow of her canoe toward the island. At the same instant, a canoe darted across her course, coming from the east, and in it were three warriors, one of whom Clarence instantly recognized as Coacoochee, not only by his person, but by his voice, as he yelled:

"Ho! ho! the White Dove has come to meet me at last, has she?"

"Back, you dog, or you shall die!" cried Ona, as the prow of the other canoe struck against her own, and the bright barrel of a pistol was leveled at the chief's head.

"Shoot him, Ona; show no mercy now," shouted Clarence, who was exerting every nerve to close with the Indians in his canoe.

The sound of his voice caused Coacoochee to turn toward him.

"Ho! ho! the pale-faced lover here? He shall die!"

And the chief raised his rifle with an ever-deadly aim upon Clarence. But the report of Ona's pistol rang loud and clear, and the rifle fell from the villain's grasp, for she had sent a bullet through the arm which raised it. The next instant, one of Clarence's revolvers was at work, and one of Coacoochee's men—the nearest one to Clarence—fell dead in the canoe. The baffled chief, with a yell of rage and mortification, sprung from his canoe into the shallow channel, and ran into the tall grass, and in a moment was lost to view. The other warrior hurried up, and would have gained the same refuge, had not Ona, whose "blood was up," served a "retainer" on him from her pistol, which tumbled him over in the water, where he struggled so desperately that, in pity, Clarence sent a bullet through his brain.

The next instant, the lovers were in each other's arms.

"Ona! mine—mine forever!" he cried.

"Thine forever!" she replied.

Then, as he saw the Indians from the camp hurrying to the shore, having been aroused by the firing, he bade Ona follow him, and paddled back to the landing.

There he explained the attack upon Ona by Coacoochee, and the fate of the latter and his party. The Indians wished at once to pursue and kill Coacoochee; but Clarence, regarding time as all-precious now, for he feared his father's pursuit, persuaded them to abandon that idea, and at once to resume their course.

When the warriors learned that Ona was determined to accompany Clarence back to his people, they were sorely puzzled. They knew that Arpiaka would never forgive them if he knew that they helped to carry his daughter away—and yet he had bidden them to obey every order of Clarence until he had been safely placed within reach of his people.

One of them asked Ona: "Will the 'White Dove' leave her father and her red brothers and sisters?"

"Yes, for a little time, but I will return to them," she answered.

"When?" asked the warrior.

"After the pale-faced chief has become my husband. I love my father, and I love his people, and will not be long away from them."

"Will the 'White Dove' swear by the Great Spirit that she will come back?"

"Yes, as sure as the Great Spirit hears me, I will return!" said Ona.

With this promise the Indians were satisfied, and instantly prepared to resume their voyage. They wished Ona to leave her canoe and enter theirs with Clarence; but she would not, preferring to go on with them in her own, which was so light and well-modeled, that she could very easily keep up with them, or even outstrip their best speed, if she so desired.

They now moved rapidly on, and had gained several miles before the day broke. They did not land to breakfast, but ate in their boat, and then, with every muscle strained, they pressed forward, hoping, before night reached them, to arrive at their destination. Leaving them thus, we will return to Arpiaka.

Soon after the sun arose, he called for Ona, for she seldom was absent from the morning meal. The servant, who was sent for her, turned and said that her door was fastened

in the inside, and that he could get no response to his call.

In an instant, the threat which Ona had made not to live without Clarence, came to his memory, and knowing her strong will and passionate spirit, he feared that she had committed suicide. Hurriedly he went to her room, and, after calling and receiving no answer, he forced in the door. The open window told him in a moment how she had left the room, and a note, left upon her little table, told him the wherefore. It was as follows:

"EVER DEAR FATHER:—For the first time in my life I act in disobedience to your wishes. I am too young to die—to die of a broken heart. You have driven that heart's master from me, and I have followed him. Pursuit is useless, for I swear by the memory of my mother, that I will end my life with my own hand if you attempt to tear me from him! If you do not, when he is my husband, and I know that you will welcome me back, I will return to you, and be ever dutiful, ever ONA."

A groan of agony burst from his lips, as he read this note.

"My child, my child!" he moaned. "Alone, alone—all is dark without Ona!"

He wandered out, and found that her canoe was gone, and then he went to her favorite arbor, and sat down and wept—wept long and bitterly. His tears seemed to relieve him, for, after a time, he became more composed, and returned to his lodge. But a cloud was on his brow, which he could not dispel.

Who but those who have lost one dearer than life to them, one whose voice and smile was like the music and light of heaven to their souls, can appreciate his grief, his utter loneliness!

He would have gone in pursuit, and he sought her return; but he knew that she was one who, having her mind once set, could not be turned, and he dared not attempt it. And he knew, too, how truthful she was, and that she would return if she lived, and with that thought he sustained his heart in its desolation, mourning now, when it was too late, that he had not consented to let Clarence remain. He liked the young man—had found him brave, honorable, and of good principle. He did not fear that his daughter would meet with wrong at his hands, but still he grieved for her absence.

CHAPTER XLIII.

It was noonday, or, perhaps, a little later, when the two canoes, containing Clarence, Ona, and their party, arrived opposite the once-lovely and fruitful island upon which Clarence had been first taken prisoner, the former home of Arpiaka and his braves. Here they stopped and landed for a short time. Ona's dark eyes were tearful when she saw how desolate and blackened all was now which had been so full of fruitful beauty when she left the spot, and the faces of the warriors were gloomy; but they remembered how Chikika had punished the second invaders, and of Indian Key, and were silent. They had lost fruit-trees, and corn, and houses; but the one could grow, and the other be built again. But the pale-faces had lost many lives, which could never be restored again!

After eating dinner, the party were ready to proceed again, but, before leaving, one of the Indians ascended the lofty tree which had before been used as a look-out, for, from amid its thick-leaved branches, the sentinel placed there could command a most extended view, reaching with the vision as far as the main land, and quite overlooking the small island, some three or four miles distant, which we have noticed before.

He had hardly reached the first limb, when a cry of alarm broke from his lips. He had detected the pale-faced sentinels in the tree tops upon the small island—the soldiers who had been placed there by the commander of the third expedition of invasion, for they had not the Indian cunning to conceal themselves from an experienced eye, like that of the warrior. He instantly communicated the discovery to his companions, one of whom soon joined him. They could from their position see the camp of the soldiers and their boats, for the island on which they were, as well as the tree in which they stood, was much higher than the other. Their little party, coming from the west through a narrow channel, had evidently not been seen by the look-outs, for no stir was visible on the smaller island to indicate it.

The Indians having reported to Clarence, a consultation was held, and with the consent, in fact by the strenuous advice of the latter, the warriors silently and stealthily decamped

in their canoe, taking the back track, so as to ware Chikika and Arpiaka of this expedition, and to themselves avoid danger. Clarence told them that to ensure their safety he and Ona would remain concealed until near night, and then would go on and meet the whites whom they would endeavor to persuade to return, and not succeeding in that, would at any rate so misdirect them as to put them off the course which endangered their red friends.

Ona gave them a message to her father, which would exonerate them from all blame, and Clarence gave them a liberal amount of gold from his purse.

And then they went off silently, and Ona and Clarence felt that they were alone, and to each other all in all. What to them was the world, its good or its evil, its riches or its poverty, its self-righteousness, or its misery. They knew not, cared not for any world but their own, peopled, enriched, beautified, lighted by their love! Oh, such a world is heaven, more than heaven!

Time was not counted while they spoke of the past, and pictured out their future, and soon the low-sinking sun told them that it was time to move so as to reach the other island before it set.

Clarence had ascended the tree, and with a small field telescope satisfied himself that the party was composed of soldiers of his own regiment; therefore he felt no fear in advancing; but though he was in his uniform, which still showed the rents made when he received the numerous wounds, he determined, for Ona's safety, to hoist a handkerchief as a white flag in the bow of his canoe, for she was in the picturesque costume of an Indian girl, and her appearance might, without proper precaution, draw fire upon her.

With her in the stern and himself in the bow of the canoe, he at last pushed off, and they paddled swiftly toward the camp of the soldiers. They knew in a short time that they were watched, but no signs of a movement upon the island being seen, Clarence halted just outside of gun shot from it and fired a gun to attract attention. He then stood up in the canoe and waved his flag, being determined to avoid every risk of being shot by his own friends.

After a short delay, three armed boats put off from the island, and approached cautiously, for an ambuscade was feared, until an officer in the leading boat, Captain Fulton, recognized Clarence.

Then he dashed on rapidly, and in a moment had him by the hand.

"Heavens, Feigner! Is this you, really you, or your ghost?"

"Me, or all that is left of me, for I've been cut up and thinned down considerably since I left the regiment!" replied Clarence.

"Why, we thought you surely had been killed, and I have your commission now with me, which I was going to send home to your mother, with an account of your supposed fate. And this—this squaw with you, does she speak English? She looks very light for an Indian!"

Clarence laughed outright, and Ona smiled.

"Permit me, Captain Fulton," said the former, "to introduce to you, Miss Livingston, formerly of New York, but late of Magnolia Place, Florida, who will soon be my bride!"

Fulton blushed deeply, and said: "Excuse me, lady—we soldiers become very rough here in the wilderness and swamps. Your costume misled me!"

"It requires no excuse from the lips of a friend to my Clarence!" said the beautiful girl. "When I am beyond the wilderness, I will resume the dress which is worn by ladies of my race!"

"And well will it become you, lady. Excuse the bluntness of an old soldier, but never have I seen in our halls of beauty one to compare with you. My lieutenant is a fortunate man!"

Ona bowed and blushed, for she was all unused to compliments; yet she need not, for the captain was too sincere and honest to think of flattery.

"But we must hurry back—the colonel is in one of his devilish humors to-day—killed a poor devil of an Indian, after torturing him almost to death to try and make him betray the hiding-place of his people. We are all heartily sick of him and his brutality. We must return, and then you must tell me how you escaped and all about it!"

And the captain gave orders to turn the boats toward the island, leading the way himself, close followed by Clarence and Ona.

CHAPTER XLIV.

It was almost impossible, in spite of the strong orders for silence, to prevent the officers and soldiers from cheering, when it was found that their favorite lieutenant, Clarence Febiger, had arrived safely in camp. The commanding officer at once sent for him, and, accompanied by Ona, he at once confronted that important individual.

"Well, sir, so you're back! A pretty cursed mess you made out of your scout—lost your men, and made us lose more, by hunting after you!" was the characteristic welcome which he received.

To these words, so rude and ungentlemanly, Clarence made no reply.

"You've got a devilish pretty squaw with you!" said the officer, as he looked with a bold and licentious gaze* upon Ona, who instinctively clung to Clarence for support and protection.

"This lady is under my protection, and as such, shall be defended from insult, sir!" said Clarence, flushing up with anger.

"Lady—she looks very like a lady, in her blanket and leggins, and short petticoat! You've very good taste, but as all squaws, whether they come in or are taken, are to be detained as prisoners, until they can be sent west, I'll relieve you of your charge of the prisoner!"

"Sir!" cried Clarence, in a tone of thunder, "this lady is as white in face as any of your blood, and ten times as pure! She will soon be my wife! Dare but breathe another insulting word, and I will make you answer for it at the sword's point!"

"God, sir! what do you mean? How dare you insult your superior officer? I'll have you court-martialed, sir, shot, sir—blast you, shot!"

"You are my superior in rank no more, sir, for from this moment I am free from the disgrace of serving under a brutal blackguard. I resign my commission, sir!" and the young officer threw the commission which Fulton had returned to him, at the feet of the colonel.

"By thunder, sir, you shall not resign!"

"You cannot prevent it, sir. I am now a private citizen, and shall at once acquaint the Secretary of War with the facts, and my reasons for it!"

"If you get the chance, curse you, if you get the chance! I suppose that you've just come from some camp where you have been treated like a lord!"

"I have come from those who have cured my wounds, and shown humanity which would shame some of those who hunt them!" replied Clarence, firmly.

"Meaning me, I suppose!"

"Meaning you, sir?" was the response.

"More foundation for charges, gentlemen. I call upon you all to remember his words!" cried the enraged commander to his officers, who, with one or two "toady" exceptions, were as much disgusted with him as Clarence was.

"I suppose," continued the commander, "that if I let you keep your squaw, you'll not object to guiding us to the Indian camp which you've lately come from?"

"Betray those who spared my life, treated me with every humanity, and when I was cured of my wounds, so as to be able to travel, set me, unconditionally, free? The proposition is as base as the heart which prompted it. Never, never will I so sink my manhood!"

"You hear his mutinous words, gentlemen. Treason, rank treason! I would be justified in shooting him down on the spot!"

"You would find it a dangerous experiment," said Clarence, with a calm smile.

"What, THREATS, sir! I arrest you! Seize and bind the mutineer, and tie up that squaw, too. Put both under guard, but keep them separate!"

The hand of Clarence was on his pistol, and Ona, whose flashing eyes spoke her scorn and indignation too, grasped her weapons, ready to die by his side bravely, if need came.

* The reader may think that the character of this officer is overdrawn. Far from it! Some officers yet live, who remember the fate of a beautiful young daughter of Chikika, while she was a prisoner in his hands, and other corroborative matters, which I cannot now refer to.

But neither officer or man stirred to execute the brutal order.

"Captain Fulton!" thundered the tyrant—"Captain Fulton, did you hear me, sir?"

"I did, sir!"

"Why, then, do you not obey my orders, sir?"

"I do not consider that I have any right to lay my hands on a private citizen, sir!"

"A private citizen—h—ll! Consider yourself under arrest, sir! I'll see if I am to be held in contempt for nothing—consider yourself under arrest, sir! Deliver your sword to Lieutenant Inge!"

"Lieutenant Inget will never take the sword of his captain, under such circumstances!" said the last named officer.

"Then, by thunder, sir, I arrest you! I'll arrest every mother's son of you, and appoint officers from the ranks!" he shouted.

"And the devil a one wud serve! Ye'd better arrist the regiment!" said a voice from among the men who had clustered around the group of officers, and were listening to all that passed.

"Who spoke then?" asked the colonel, fairly boiling over with rage.

"Biddy O'Grallagan!" said some one, and then a titter ran through the crowd.

"By Heavens, this mutiny shall be the death of some you. Lieutenant Snip, take that woman to my quarters, and have Febiger tied up and put under guard!" cried the commander to one of his toadies.

Clarence, who knew Ona well, and what she would be apt to do, said nothing, as the *sub* approached her, with the intention of putting the order into execution, so far as she was concerned, for he had been a tailor, and wasn't afraid of a woman.

He got within about two yards of her, when he very suddenly halted, and, turning as white as his pipe-clayed belt, he stammered, with a trembling voice, "Don't shoot—don't shoot, for the Lord's sake!"

For Ona stood with one foot advanced, and a long barreled pistol in her hand, aimed directly at his eye—her finger on the trigger, and a look in her face so calm, that he knew that death was his doom, if he advanced but one step.

"You cursed coward, I'll take her myself!" cried the colonel, springing forward; but he stopped, too, when the pistol barrel was as quietly and steadily turned to his eye.

"Why don't you take her, sir?" said Clarence, bitterly. "So brave an officer ought not to fear a woman!"

"By the eternal! she shall die!" shouted the infuriated man—"she shall die!" and he half drew his sword.

"Shame, shame!" cried officers and men.

"Let him go on, gentlemen!" said Ona, whose voice of melody now fell upon their ears for the first time. "When he has drawn that weapon, and advanced one step toward me, he will have taken his last step in life, and I will be justified in sending him down to meet his master!"

A cheer broke from the lips of the rude soldiers, when they saw how bravely the heroine held herself.

"We will break up this camp, and return to the fort at once!" said the colonel, whose rage was only equaled by his mortification, and he turned away to his tent.

"As I am free, I will proceed at once! Come Ona!" said Clarence, turning to his canoe.

"I am under arrest, and not required with my company; permit me to go along and help paddle your canoe!" said Fulton.

"Certainly, captain, certainly!" said Clarence, and soon the three were on their way to the Miamas.

"By the gods of war, Miss Livingston, you cooled the colonel down in a hurry!" said the captain, after he had paddled some time. "Clarence will never have occasion to fight your battles!"

"Nor any other, I hope, hereafter, sir! His resignation brings joy to my heart, for I shall have him all to myself!"

"But his comrades will regret it, lady! He was the life of the regiment!"

"My only wonder is, that all of them who are men, do not follow his example, rather than to serve under a brutal tyrant," said Ona. "I thought none but gentlemen held commissions in the army. How could such a man as he get his high position?"

"By political influence, lady! Made right from the cotton-field—a nigger-driver there, and not much better here! Our graduates from the military academy are gentlemen, so are many of the citizen appointments, but such men as he will sometimes get in!"

They soon entered the little river, and went rapidly down its swift current, and, long before midnight, were at the fort. Observing that one of the transport steamboats, used to bring stores, etc., from more northern ports, was at anchor off the mouth of the river, Clarence determined to go on board at once, for he did not wish to give the brutal tyrant another opportunity to insult either Ona or himself.

This he did, and was warmly welcomed by the captain, whom he knew, and whose wife being on board, could render many attentions to Ona, which she required, and also furnish her with different clothes, which would not attract so much attention.

"When do you leave, Captain Duke?" asked Clarence, after he had explained his position, and his recent adventures.

"For Savannah, to-morrow just as soon as the quarter-master has put some wood aboard for me, and signed all the receipts!" said the captain.

"I shall go with you—I and my sweet wife that is to be!" said he.

"I'm glad of that. If you feel in a hurry to get married, I'll run into St. Augustine, and find a priest for you!"

"Thank you, my dear Duke, thank you! I do not feel so anxious, now that my bride-elect is in safe quarters!" said Clarence, smiling at the kind-hearted proposition, and resigning Ona to the care of Mrs. Duke, for the exhausted girl much needed rest.

"You must come to my private state-room, and take a toddy with me, in honor of the occasion!" said the captain. "Fulton has gone ashore, for he expects a breeze when old Brick-top gets down the river. The old heathen had better not put on any of his hifalutin' airs aboard this boat, or he'll go overboard as sure as my name is Jim Duke!"

Clarence could not well refuse the invitation—therefore, he followed the warm-hearted captain to his "private state-room," as he called it, which was almost entirely filled with jugs, bottles, demijohns, small kegs, and cigar-boxes—and there they both "smiled."

CHAPTER XLV.

Moving much more slowly than Clarence, with the light canoe, and also taking some time to break up camp, for the discontented men worked sullenly and lazily, it was nearly dawn when the colonel reached the fort with his forces.

His first inquiry upon landing was for Clarence and Ona, for while his bad heart burned with fury against the first, the beauty of the last had added a more fiendish passion than rage to his nature.

He instantly ordered an officer of the garrison to go on board and bring them ashore. The officer soon returned, and of course without having accomplished the object of his mission.

"Why the d—n didn't you bring them ashore, dead or alive, sir?" cried the colonel, who had got rum enough in him to make him more brutal than ever.

"He has resigned from the service, sir, and I dare not risk my commission by placing my hand upon a private citizen!" replied the officer.

"But the squaw—the squaw!" cried the colonel, showing his "full hand;" "she is a prisoner, and by Heaven shall remain so!"

"If you mean the lady who is with him, you are mistaken, sir! She is a lady, as fair and well-bred as the first in the land!"

"You lie—curse you, you lie!"

"Your rank shields you alone from punishment, sir, and your conduct would disgrace a brothel!" said the officer, retiring in disgust from his presence.

"By the eternal, I'll go myself!" he cried.

"Orderly! send Lieutenant Snip here!"

The orderly obeyed, and soon the ex-tailor made his appearance. He looked a very good "pattern" of the ninth part of a man, and any one would wonder how he could have got into the service, who did not understand how some officials pay their tailor-bills in Washington. The son of a tailor, dressmaker, bootmaker, hatter, or milliner, can always find influence for an office, or commission, which the worthy

descendant of a revolutionary hero would ask for in vain. There is at this moment a wealthy wine-merchant, in one of our large seaboard cities, whose boast is, that his son's commission only cost him a half-a-dozen baskets of champagne, Jersey-made at that.

"Lieutenant Snip, go and select ten men, whom you know you can depend upon to obey orders, and prepare to go on board of that steamer to make an arrest. And, curse you, don't you show the white feather again, as you did last night, or I'll run you through quicker than I did the Indian! Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Snip; "but—"

"But what, sir?"

"Are you going to try to arrest Febiger and his woman?"

"Not to try, but to do it—curse you, to do it! Now, do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir—but hadn't I better order out a whole company, instead of ten men, sir? Febiger is dreadful desperate, and I'd rather face the devil than that woman! She'd kill a fellow before he could take a stitch in a button-hole!"

"Curse you for a sneaking tailor—I can never make a man of you! Go and obey my orders; muster ten men, and bring them here, or I'll break your thick head!"

Thus admonished, Snip disappeared, and the tyrant began to prepare himself to carry out his manly intentions, by taking a stiffener of whiskey—his favorite beverage.

The orderly, who had heard all of this conversation, now whispered to another soldier, who, like himself, was friendly to Clarence, to go and inform Captain Fulton of the plans of the tyrannical wretch. The latter at once went on board of the steamer, where he found Captain Duke and Clarence, both afoot, early as it was.

He at once stated the object of his visit.

"Old Brick-top coming here to try to take away my passengers?" cried Captain Duke, who at all times was excitable, as most warm-hearted men are, but doubly so now. "By the big pewter spoon that Goliah eat mush and milk with, he'll find his match! Here, you Pluto, you angel of darkness, come here!"

The black cook answered this summons, and as he stood there, showing his ivories, he asked what "massa cap'n" wanted?

"Have you got hot water in the coppers?"

"Yes, sah!"

"Well, stir up the fire, and keep it hot, and when you hear me whistle, bring me two buckets of it, and make Pomp and Sam bring four more, and when and where I tell you to heave it, heave! Do you understand?"

"Yes, sah!" said the darkie, who was used to his master's odd ways, and knew how to obey orders without asking questions.

"And tell the mate I want him!" said the captain.

The mate was near by, and at once responded to the inquiry for him, in person.

"Mr. Smith, just trice up the accommodation ladders on both sides of the vessel, so that anybody who comes aboard of here, without my consent, will have some climbing to do!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded the officer.

"And let me know, Mr. Smith, the moment that you see a boat coming from shore, and see if old Brick-top, Colonel ——, is in it!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You must not get yourself into trouble on my account, my dear Duke!" said Clarence. "I can very easily defend myself, for I am well armed!"

"Just you be easy, if you please, Mr. Febiger!" replied the captain, blandly. "What I do here is on my own account. The 'right of visit' and 'the right of search' are two things which no bloody soldier (present company always excepted, gentlemen), like old Brick-top, shall ever make me acknowledge! If he gets himself into hot water, it will be because he sticks his nose where he has no business to put it. But come, gentlemen, my throat tickles. I've got an anti-fog-matic beverage down in my private state-room, which has been commended by all of the doctors, and two-thirds of the preachers in the land, as being 'good for the stomach!' Let's try some of it!"

The captain, under the circumstances, could not expect a refusal, nor did he receive it.

"There is a boat coming from shore, sir!" reported the mate, at the moment when they held their glasses to their lips.

"Very well, Mr. Smith! Take a nip, sir! Are the ladders triced up?"

"Yes, sir!"

"And Brick-top in the boat?"

"Yes, sir, with an officer and a dozen soldiers, all armed!"

"Very well. Tell the cook and his niggers to have their hot water ready. Let the rest of the men be hunting up handspikes and cordwood knots about decks. You understand me, don't you?"

"Yes, sir!" said the mate, tossing off his grog, and then hastening to obey orders.

Captains Duke and Fulton and Clarence now took their bitters, and then went on deck to see what was next on the programme.

The boat from shore was nearly alongside. The colonel, whose face was red as fire, excited alike with rum and anger, shouted as she came near:

"What have you got your ladders pulled up for, you infernal curse!"

"You brick-topped old heathen you, if you curse me, I'll give you something to remember till the devil gets you!" shouted Duke.

"Lower down your ladder, so that I can come aboard!"

"I'll see you entirely, particularly, and essentially cursed first!" replied Duke.

"Climb up there, one of you, and lower down the ladder!" shouted the colonel, as his boat's bow touched the steamer's side.

"Stand by with the water, Pluto!" said Duke, in a low tone.

"Yes, massa cap'n, him all ready!" said the negro, with a broad grin.

A moment later, as the head and shoulders of a soldier appeared over the steamer's rail Duke pointed toward it and said, "heave!"

With a yell of agony the soldier let go all holds, and dropped back into the boat.

"Give them all a dose—old Brick-top as well as the rest!" shouted Duke, and in a second the whole boat's crew found themselves literally in "hot water," and, yelling and screaming, they pushed clear of the steamer,

"I'll sink your cursed boat!" yelled the colonel, kicking poor Snip to make him stop howling.

"Try it!" cried Duke. "I've got guns as well as hot water! And tell your quartermaster if he isn't alongside soon with my receipts, I'll go off without them, and report him and you to the department! I'm not going to lose my steamer's time, waiting for a parcel of rum-swilling, squaw-hunting soldiers like yourself!"

"I suppose you'll lower your ladder for the quarter-master?"

"Yes, but if you offer to come with him, I'll give you more hot water, you blasted heathen!"

The discomfited colonel now returned to the shore to have his scalds dressed, and he did not find it convenient to return when the quarter-master came off.

And though many boats came from shore, bringing officers who wished to bid Clarence adieu and wish him happiness with his bride there was no further occasion to use hot water. It had worked a miracle, for it had effectually cooled the ardor of the tyrant, and rendered him sensible to the soothing influences of sweet oil and laudanum.

Clarence made a confidant of Captain Fulton, so far as to let him know who the father of Ona was, that in case he should be taken he might find a friend in him, but he did not reveal any clue by which his retreat could be discovered.

The sun had not quite reached its meridian when Captain Duke was ready for sea, fired up and off. Rapidly the steamer swept down the smooth bay, and, taking the high tide, steered out through the narrow channel of "Bear Cut," to the north of Key Biscayne, and was soon heading away to the north-eastward, with wind and current both in her favor. And now, out upon the glorious ocean, far from the reach of those who had so lately imperilled their peace, Ona felt indeed that Clarence was all her own, and that, henceforth, all would be sunshine to her. She thought but little of her father's grief and loneliness—she was too happy to think!

Ah, how selfish is love! And why should it not be? I only ask a reply from those who love! Let old bachelors and ancient maidens hold their peace.

CHAPTER XLVI.

How suddenly in life are the brightest prospects clouded. Truly, when we speak of fate and fortune, we may say that they are fickle, more fickle than the changing wind. We are told by wise and holy men that the decrees of Providence are immutable. Perhaps they are so. But, without any disrespect, permit me to say that I think they are shrouded in a very unnecessary amount of mystery. Why can't a fellow know what is coming, see the grand finale, and shape his ends to meet it decently, with his clothes on and buttoned up.

When Captain Duke's steamer left the Bay of Biscayne, and edged up on her course in the blue Gulf Stream, all was fair overhead, scarce a cloud in sight, and not a sign of an approaching gale. The sea rolled smoothly on, and the steamer, under a full head, clove the blue waters asunder, and swept rapidly northward. Her sails were spread to the favoring breeze, in addition to her steam, and each mile that she made, increasing the distance between Clarence and his foes, lightened the heart of Ona, although they also increased the distance which separated her from her father, whom she loved ever tenderly.

Yet loved she more than all on earth or in heaven, him upon whose arm she leaned, as they paced to and fro upon the steamer's promenade deck, now glancing off over the far blue waters of the Gulf Stream upon many a snowy sail, which, like a white-winged bird, glided over it, then looking shoreward upon the fadeless green and rich hued foliage of that tropic clime.

The houses of the military posts, known as Fort Sanderdale, were soon passed; then came in sight the bluff known as the Black Rocks, and Captain Duke ordered the engineers to press her, so that she should double Caernarvon's ugly cape before night with its darkness set in.

Clarence noticed with some apprehension that the captain very often went into the cabin and looked at his barometer; but he carefully concealed his fears, if he had any, from Ona, and, finally, with some well devised excuse, got her down into the cabin, and placed a book in her hand which he knew would interest her, for she had passed her happiest hours in such companionship while in the camp of her father. Having done this, Clarence sought the captain, who, seeing that he was disengaged, solicited his company to a spiritual consultation in his private state-room.

"Why do you look at your barometer, today, so often, captain?" asked Clarence, with assumed carelessness, while he "qualified" a whiskey toddy with some water.

"Oh, it's a habit I have!" said the captain, "I always keep my eyes open in these latitudes, especially at this season, when a blow springs up all of a sudden, and no one can tell how long it will last."

"But, Duke, my dear fellow, you know I'm no coward—we've sailed together before; you know that the weather, though fair now, looks like a change."

"Well, lieutenant, seeing that it is you, I don't know as I need to hide it. The barometer has been falling ever since morning, and I am now crowding all the steam and sail I can, in hopes of being able to get into Indian River, if I can, before a blow comes on. The 'old boat' was never built for outside work on the ocean, and though she is staunch for her age, build, and tonnage, I've no wish to test her capacity in a gale in the gulf."

"Nor I to see you do it," said Clarence, while a shade of anxiety crossed his face. "Is there anything which I can do to aid you, Captain Duke?"

"Nothing, sir, only keep that lady-bird of yours easy in her mind, and don't let any one aboard see you look anxious. I never let my men feel through my looks that there is danger, no matter what there is before me."

"You can rely on me—I will be as cool as yourself, captain, and to be more so is impossible!" replied Clarence, and he again sought the side of his lady-love, and entered into cheerful conversation with her.

Meantime, the change indicated by the barometer so long before, began to be visible to the eye. The fresh westerly breeze died away, and the sails flapped so idly against the spars, that the officer of the deck had them taken in. And the air grew still, and hot, and stifling. And a heavy circlet of cloud seemed to be slowly rising from the horizon all around.

That a gale was coming, all could see, but from what direction no one could say.

" Crowd on the steam, crowd on the steam!" cried Captain Duke to the engineer, who looked up from the engine room to cool his burning face.

" God, sir, she will not bear another ounce, nor can fire make it for her!" replied the officer.

" Thank God! the bluff of St. Lucie looms up in sight at last!" said he. " Give us only three hours more of calm, and it may blow all creation up by the roots, for all that I care. I'll be at snug moorings then."

As he spoke, a low but distant rumbling rolled across the water. It was the sound of the thunder-car of the spirit of the storm. And now more rapidly did the cloud-belt rise, which so darkly circled them. The captain calmly ordered all the light spars sent down, the boats to be secured with extra fastenings, and everything loose on deck and below to be made fast. And he bade the engineer keep up the steam and look well to his machinery. This done, he calmly stood by the helmsman, and waited for the gale.

And near him stood Clarence and Ona, for she had heard the rapid orders, and intuitively knew that danger was apprehended. But she did not tremble nor pale, though she clung closely to the arm of Clarence, for her eyes were on his face, not upon the sky, and that face was as quiet and calm as if he was sleeping.

Everything was very still now, except the clang of the engine and the dash of the paddles in the water. The crew were silent; there was no wind, even the distant thunder ceased to roll, while the clouds gathered thick and dark overhead, until the scene wore almost the gloom of night. In the west, the white outlines of a sandy beach, with tall pines for a background, could be seen—all else around was sombre water.

Suddenly, a gleam of lightning shot athwart the whole sky, seeming to tear the huge density of cloud into a thousand ragged fragments. And close upon it followed a terrific peal of thunder, as if an hundred batteries of cannon had all at once belched forth their tremendous fire. Then from the rent clouds came vast torrents of rain, so dense, so heavy, that the crew sought refuge below, except those on immediate duty, and Ona was glad, with Clarence, to seek shelter in the roomy wheel-house by the side of the captain. Never had she seen rain pour in that way before.

Meantime, the steamer held her course, steadily plunging through the black and seething waters, as if endued with life; and the brave captain, with his favorite steersman by his side, watched the compass, and prayed that no worse than rain would come.

" Are we not near the port?" asked Clarence, at last.

" Only an hour's or two hours' run from it, at the furthest, if it holds calm!" replied the captain.

Just as he spoke, a tremendous concussion was heard amongst the machinery below, and the next moment the wheels of the steamer stopped.

" Good God, what is the matter now?" asked Clarence.

The engineer rushed on deck at that instant, and reported to Captain Duke that the main shaft was broken short off.

" Damnation!" was the only response of Duke, as he hurried below to look at the damage. He soon returned, and, though he assumed a forced calmness, he could not conceal that he was annoyed and troubled.

" Well, what's the damage?" asked Clarence, who had persuaded Ona to go into the cabin, promising to call her if the danger increased.

" If we had a fair wind, and not too much of it, I wouldn't care?" said Duke. " We have got to depend upon our canvas now, for we cannot get the shaft repaired on this side of Savannah."

While he was speaking, the rain ceased almost as suddenly as it had come on, and the darkness began to clear away.

" I think a breeze will soon spring up!" said Clarence.

" More than a breeze—an infernal gale, I expect!" muttered Duke. And then he gave orders to reef the fore-and-aft sails of the steamer, and to double the sheets, and get up additional stays for the masts and chimneys. Having seen this done, and knowing that he could do no more, but must in patience await the issue, whatever it might be, the captain

invited Clarence to visit his "private state-room" once more, "for," said he, "it is likely that I shall be too busy for such matters in a little while, and a drop or two won't hurt me just now, it isn't likely."

Clarence silently complied with his request, for he had not the heart to refuse him, so sorrowful did he seem in his trouble.

They soon returned to the deck. Night was now approaching, and they were slowly drifting in toward the beach. Captain Duke now ordered the anchors cleared, and the cables ranged, and then, the thought striking him that help might be sent out from Indian River, if his signals of distress were heard at the fort there, he caused his pilot gun to be fired several times.

" What sound is that?" asked Clarence, as a low and sullen roar came up from the south-eastward, sounding like the distant clamor of an angry multitude of men.

" It is that which I most dreaded, a gale, and blowing right on shore!" said Captain Duke, uneasily, as he glanced to windward. " If this were a staunch clipper, stout sparred, and with a good hold below water, and but little above it, we might claw off, but, as it is, with our heavy upper works, and scanty sail, we cannot. I fear that I shall have to beach her."

" There would not be much risk in that, while the sea is smooth!" said Clarence. " We could reach the land safely, over the bows of the boat!"

" But the safety after we get there would be the question!" said Duke, earnestly. " The coast swarms with Indians, who watch for every wreck, and pounce on their helpless crews!"

" But your crew numbers twenty men or more, good and true, and we have plenty of arms and ammunition!"

" What will twenty men be against a hundred or two savages, who have the advantage of a knowledge of the country?"

" They must be all in all to us! I have something more than life to fight for!" sighed Clarence, as he thought of poor Ona.

The sound of the rising gale came now, louder and louder, on their ears, and the watchful captain trimmed his scanty sails so as best to meet it. A little longer only had they to wait, and then it came with fearful force. At first, the steamer careened so that she appeared to be capsizing, and Clarence hastened to the side of Ona, to relieve her of fear, and to aid her when it became necessary.

The captain saw at once, that the only way to save his crew would be to beach the vessel before the sea became too rough for the crew to land, and, with a heavy heart, he gave the order to hoist a sail forward, and to put the helm up so as to run in. For no captain looks upon the approaching loss of his vessel but with grief.

Orders were given to the crew to get out provisions, etc., and to arm themselves well, and prepare plenty of ammunition. Some tents, and other necessary articles, were ordered up, and then all was ready.

Clarence and Ona stood on deck, ready, like the rest, to meet the shock when the vessel should strike the shore. She now moved swiftly on before the howling gale—the white beach and its crumbling breakers were close on board, and in a short time, just as the sun was going down in the west, the ill-fated vessel struck. By her own force, and the swift-following surges, she was forced high up on the beach, and it was an easy thing to land from over her bows, and to take on shore the articles which had been selected. But they were obliged to hasten in this, for the storm rose with fearful rapidity and strength, and they soon heard the heavy seas crashing in the bulwarks and strong timbers of the boat.

" Now that we are ashore, you must take command," said the captain to Clarence. " I will shoulder my musket, and do a soldier's duty for the poor steamer is gone-in fact!"

Clarence, thus urged, took charge, and with a soldier's ready tact and skill, formed his encampment in a thick grove, a short distance back from the sea, where the tents could be pitched easily, and safe from the force of the gale, and at once posted sentinels at a proper distance around the camp, to avoid a surprise.

Darkness came on by the time that the camp was pitched and the provisions stored, but camp-fires were lighted, and the men felt cheerful, while they listened to the tempest which waged over the wild waters, for they felt that they had escaped a great danger, the almost certainty of perishing at sea.

" How far do you think we are from Indian River?" asked Clarence of Captain Duke, after the sentinels had been posted, and all was quiet in the camp.

" Not more than thirty miles!" said the latter.

" Then, to-morrow, we can easily go or send there!"

" It is a hard country to travel over, lieutenant!"

" Not so hard as the Big Cypress, and I've traveled many a mile in that."

" Not when you had a delicate woman to take care of!"

" Oh, you need not fear for Ona! She is as light of foot, and as fleet as a fawn!"

" And will tire as soon, maybe!" said Duke, gloomily.

" What is the matter of you to-night?" asked Clarence. " You are generally so gay and light-hearted, that you keep everybody out of the blues!"

" Do you hear the poor old steamer breaking up?" replied Drake. " Before morning there won't be one timber of her left stuck to another. And what's to come next I don't know, but I feel as if something terrible was coming, and I can't help it. You know, I am the last to whine without a reason, but there is a feeling on me which I cannot shake off!"

" Well, turn in, captain, and try and take some sleep. I shall act as officer of the guard for the first half of the night. I will call you for the next watch!"

The captain went in gloomy silence to the tent which had been pitched for him, and Clarence, after visiting Ona in her tent, and telling her to sleep without fear, took his round of visit to the sentinels.

So loud was the noise of the dashing surf and violent wind, that all other sounds were drowned, and it was only when close to each other that their voices could be understood. In consequence, the sentinels were cautioned to be very attentive, for at such a time, a surprise could most easily be effected. And none but those who have been engaged in warfare with the wily and treacherous savages, can imagine their cunning, how much like the panther they creep upon their victims, how merciless they are when they are successful.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The night wore slowly on to Clarence, but he passed it away in his rounds to the sentinels, visits to the front of the tent of his beloved, and in thinking of the singular adventures which he had lately passed through. Unlike the captain, his heart beat high with hope, and joyful anticipations of the future. He looked forward to the hour when Ona should be his bride, and when he should have the happiness to present her as a daughter, to his beloved mother.

At twelve Clarence aroused a fresh guard of men from their slumbers, and proceeded to relieve the guard. The new sentinels were cautioned particularly to be on the alert, especially toward the approach of day, for it is supposed that men sleep most soundly just at the end of night, and that time, more often than any other, is selected for an attack. True it is with those who are not used to be forever on the watch for a surprise, that when the greater part of the night has been passed in safety, they relax in vigilance and caution.

When Clarence went to arouse Captain Duke, he found him already awake.

" I heard you when you changed the guard," said he, "but I did not leave my tent, for I knew that you would come here when I was wanted. I have not yet closed my eyes, nor can I. There is a weight upon my heart which I cannot heave off—I am sure there is more trouble ahead!"

" Pshaw, don't let such thoughts enter your brain; take a drop of comfort from that Schiedam case, and a walk in the fresh air, and you'll feel as lively as a cricket!"

The captain sighed, and (for a wonder), refused the "spiritual consolation" indicated by Clarence; but he went out, and with the latter visited the different sentinels, so as to learn the locations of their posts. Then Clarence returned, and wrapping his military cloak around him, cast himself down on the ground, in front of Ona's tent, and was soon sound asleep.

How long he lay in this slumber he knew not but he had a fearful dream. He thought

In it, that he was surrounded by a band of yelling savages, and that a huge warrior was bearing Ona away, she struggling and screaming, but powerless in his arms. He woke—the yells and her wild screams were all too real! He tried to rise, but was thrust or knocked backward on the earth, and felt that his enemies were binding him.

It was almost dawn, and when the light came, a fearful sight presented itself to his horrified vision. More than one-half of the men lay scalped where they had been sleeping, for the sentinels had been struck down in their tracks, so silently had their foes crept upon them. The residue of the men were bound captives like himself, and prominent was the poor captain, bleeding from a wound in the head, by which he was knocked senseless at the onslaught. Poor Ona was bound, too, but what struck the most horror to the heart of Clarence, was the discovery that "Wild Cat," or Coacoochee, was the principal leader of the savage band.

"So, pale-face, and Arpiaka's squaw-child, belong to me once more! ugh! Me like 'em heap! Make young pale-face chief eat fire! Arpiaka's squaw shall see him dance and hear him sing! Me laugh big heap, ugh!"

"If I was free I'd make you laugh on the other side of your face, you red dog!" said Clarence, bitterly.

"Ugh! Much talk, you! By-and-bye, cry a little! Me laugh heap!" said Coacoochee, delighted that his taunts had stirred Clarence to anger.

A strong guard of the Indians was kept around the prisoners, but the main body of them were engaged in pillaging from the wreck, the stores and materials of which lay strewed up and down the beach in every direction.

"See—they are at your liquor!" said Clarence, in a low tone, to Duke.

"Yes, blast the infernal heathen, I wish it would poison them!" replied the captain.

"It will make them drunk!" said Clarence.

"And devilish!" said Duke.

"Helpless and stupid, I hope, and then there may be a chance for our escape!" said Clarence.

"Not tied up, as we are, like a parcel of sheep, ready for the butcher!" growled the captain.

Poor Ona, pale and terror-stricken to the very heart, was silent all this time, for, from the Indian's talk, which she well understood, she learned that Clarence and all of the men were destined for the torture, while she alone was to be spared for a fate to her worse than death, for Coacoochee claimed her as his prize.

For a time Coacoochee remained with his prisoners, and kept a keen watch over his guard; but when he saw the prizes which the rest were finding on the beach, and the "fire-water," for which he, like most red men, had a taste, he joined with the others. For well he knew that his captives were safely bound, and were they even loose, unarmed as they were, he would soon recapture them.

Meantime, the red sun swept up the cloudless sky; for the storm had passed away, though the great seas rolled heavily in from gulfward. And in the distance white sails could be seen on the blue water, but they kept far away from the dreaded coast, about which many a tale of red-handed murder had already been told.

As the day shortened, the Indians, or many of them, at least, became intoxicated, and though for a while furious and dangerous in their drunkenness, they at last subsided into stupor. But Coacoochee, though he had drank considerable liquor, was too cunning to become so entirely helpless as the rest of his warriors; and their women, who never drink, took the places of guards over the captives, as well as their drunken lords.

The agony of Clarence and the captain was very intense, for they had been bound in most painful positions, and the cords had been drawn with all the force of Coacoochee's hatred, and cut deep into their limbs. The chief had been more careful of Ona, but she was secured so that, much as she desired it, she could not relieve Clarence in his suffering. But she persuaded one of the squaws, by using gentle words in her own language, to give them all water to cool their burning lips, for they lay in the hot sun. And from this she hoped to gain yet other favors, for the name of her father was great among all the Indians, and his power was feared. So she com-

menced to speak to the squaw of her position.

"I am Coacoochee's wife—he is my master, not Arpiaka!" replied the woman, haughtily, looking at the chief, who had lain down under a tree near by, and seemed to be sleeping.

"Does the wife of Coacoochee love him?" asked Ona, determined to try to win her way on a new track, and one most vulnerable in woman-nature, for show me the woman who was never jealous, and I will point out her who never loved!

"As the doe loves its mate—as the she-bear loves its cubs. I would die for him!" replied the squaw.

"And does Coacoochee love his wife?" continued Ona.

"Does the sun shine? Does water run? Coacoochee loves Minataroh!"

"Then why did he come to the lodge of Arpiaka, and ask him for his daughter, long ago? Why did he seek to tear her away from her father's arms? Look at the last scar on his body, the wound not yet all healed! It was got when he was trying to get the daughter of Arpiaka to be his squaw! Why does he now keep me a captive here?"

"To make you eat fire!" replied Minataroh.

"No!" said Ona. "He thinks that I am beautiful. He will burn my friends, but me he will take to his lodge. He has said it. He will make me his wife, and tell you to draw water, and bring wood, and cook for me!" said Ona.

"The daughter of Arpiaka lies!" said the squaw, fiercely. "Minataroh will not be a slave for her."

"She will, unless Minataroh will loosen her bonds, and let her fly from the presence of Coacoochee while he sleeps."

"Go!" said the excited squaw, and, with a knife, she cut the bonds which had confined Ona's limbs together.

But ere the latter could move, Coacoochee, with one bound, leaped from his pretended slumber, and stood, with fiendish rage depicted in every look, before her. His glittering hatchet was raised high above his head, and his flashing eyes wandered from her to the squaw, who now knelt cowering at his feet. Death was in his look, and Clarence trembled in unutterable agony for the life of poor Ona. The glittering weapon was whirled around the Indian's head two or three times, then, like lightning, it descended, and Clarence closed his eyes in horror as he heard its dull crash when it entered the skull of the fiend's victim.

Not a moan or a shriek followed the cruel act, and Clarence, thinking that she had died without pain, and it was better than she should live and suffer, raised his head to look once more upon her whom he so loved.

Coacoochee was calmly wiping away the blood and brains from his hatchet, while one of his feet rested upon the body of Minataroh, for she, and not Ona, had fallen a sacrifice to his anger.

"Arpiaka's squaw-child had better have kept her tongue close," said the grim warrior, as he re-bound the horror-stricken girl, "She'll have to bring her own wood and water, when she goes to the lodge of Coacoochee."

"Does Coacoochee love money? Does he want arms, fine cloths, and rich presents?" asked Clarence, hoping to tempt the cupidity of the Indian. "If he will take me and my companions to a post of my people, I will give him ten thousand dollars."

"Money, heap, me like 'em, but love revenge more!" said the chief, haughtily. "Today, Indians drunk—all fools. To-morrow they'll be sober, and then the pale-faces shall eat fire and sing the death song. To-night, you shall hear your squaw sing a new song, for she shall sleep in the arms of Coacoochee. Then your heart will be glad to eat fire, eh?"

"Accursed monster, let me loose but for one moment, and I'll teach you a new song!" muttered Clarence, who forgot his bodily agony in the thought that the infernal wretch might be so devilish as to carry out his horrible threat, and force him to hear her cries of misery while he could not help her. Such torture, more dreadful than any invented by even the demons of the Inquisition!

The day wore slowly on, and night came, but it brought no relief to the suffering party. The Indians, as they recovered from their first stupor, woke only to drink again; but still the captives were guarded by Coacoochee, and others of the women, who, knowing the fate of poor Minataroh, were careful not to risk offending him who had slain her.

The pale moon arose, and lighted up the scene with almost the brilliancy of day. Even the camp fires seemed pale in its light. And Coacoochee, led on by his taste, and apparently forgetful of his threat in regard to Ona, again took to the fire-water; and it was with supreme joy that Clarence saw him take from among the medical stores a bottle of antimonial wine, the taste of which pleased him so much that he had nearly drained its contents before he began to feel its sickening effects.

When he did, and began to feel the deathly qualmishness, which was the natural result of an emetic so very powerful, Clarence laughed aloud, and the Indian began to feel fearfully alarmed.

"Why does the pale-face chief laugh?" he asked.

"Because Coacoochee has drank poison, and will soon sing his death-song," said Clarence, boldly.

The Indian groaned fearfully, for the deathly sickness grew so fast upon him that he felt as if he could not rise.

"Ugh!" he groaned, as the cold sweat beaded out in large drops on his brow. "Ugh! me sick heap. Ugh!" and he dashed the half-emptied bottle away.

"If Coacoochee will do right, I can save him," said Clarence. "I can kill the poison with medicine."

"Kill it then—kill it quick—and me no kill you!" said Coacoochee, who began to writhe with pain.

"Release me and my friends, and I will," said Clarence, "Set us free, and give us our arms, and I will give you the medicine."

"Me set you free; the rest, no!" groaned the Indian.

"Then die! See, the poison works!" cried Clarence, as the Indian writhed in pain, and commenced vomiting fearfully.

"Ugh! ugh! me heap sick. Give me the medicine," moaned the Indian, while the frightened squaws looked on in terror, and Captain Duke rolled and yelled with laughter.

"Go it, wild-cat," he cried. "Heave up your leggins and moccasins, heave yourself inside out! Ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! ho! he! he!"

"Give me medieine, pale-face," moaned Coacoochee to Clarence, for he who would have died without a word or groan upon the battle-field, was now more weak than a woman.

"Release your prisoners, and I will. Be quick, or it will be too late for me to save you!" thundered Clarence, who felt that, through his terror, he could now conquer the fiendish chief.

Coacoochee, in the intervals of his spasms, muttered some orders to the squaws, and, in a few moments, Clarence and the whole party were free and in the possession of their arms. Then Clarence administered a large dose of sweet oil to Coacoochee, and, after he had cast up the residue of the emetic from his stomach, gave him a powerful dose of morphine, which soon left him in a slumber so profound that he could not be awakened.

Then, with Ona and the rest, he hurried away from the camp, determined to get as far from it as possible before Coacoochee should recover and the drunken warriors be able to follow.

A short distance from the rear of the camp, they came upon a long and narrow lagoon, where lay the canoes in which the Indians had come, some thirty or more in number. The old captain uttered a cry of joy when he saw the water.

"It connects with Indian River," he cried. "We can soon get to the fort there, and then the red dogs may go to the devil for all I care for them. Me eat fire, eh? I'll see them in Jericho first!"

The first order which Clarence gave was to destroy and sink every canoe, except just those which were necessary to contain his party alone. This done, looking well that his arms were all in order, he pushed off with speed, taking the direction which the captain assured him lead to the fort.

But they did not make great speed, for the lagoon was crooked and narrow, and they repeatedly grounded upon sand-bars, in consequence of being ignorant of the channel.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The men were so much stiffened by having been bound so long, and the navigation of the lagoon was so difficult, that Clarence knew that, when the day dawned, he had not made more than six or seven miles in a direct course from the place of wreck, and if, as Duke conjectured, the fort at Indian River was thirty miles from that, they were still nearly a day's journey from it, or even more, at the rate they went. But he urged the men on all that he could, for he feared the pursuit of the Indians, who could very easily shoot down his men from the banks of the lagoon, for in places it was very narrow, and nowhere was it more than a couple of hundred yards in width.

But, as the hot sun went up, the men began to grow faint, for, in their haste to escape, provisions had been forgotten, and the water of the lagoon, from which they drank, was bitter and brackish, and rather increased than assuaged their thirst. But the captain and Clarence encouraged them to persevere, themselves using paddles, and urging them forward by the oft-repeated thought that death was in their rear, and safety only to be reached ahead.

As the time lengthened, so did their efforts grow more and more faint and, at last, fierce yells, heard in the woods which skirted the lagoon behind them, told Clarence that his worst fears were being realized. Like fierce bloodhounds, the yelling fiends of the forest were upon their track.

"God help us! we've got to fight our way now," said Clarence, as he looked back and saw dusky forms glancing through the leafy covert.

"Hadn't we better take cover and rest the men a little while?" said Captain Duke, pointing to a small island in the centre of the lagoon, close to them, which, being thickly wooded, would protect them from the fire of the Indians, and enable them to return their shots with effect.

"Yes, the idea is good," replied Clarence, steering toward the island.

In a few moments they were all landed, and their canoes drawn up in the bushes. After placing Ona in a spot where no chance ball could reach her, Clarence posted his men behind trees, and waited the attack. It soon commenced, for the Indians, led on by the enraged and disappointed Coacoochee, were furious. At first, they so exposed themselves that several fell before the aim of Clarence and his men, who felt a desire to avenge their murdered companions.

But this only taught them caution, and under cover, they took care of themselves, while they still continued to fire on the whites whenever one of them showed the smallest portion of his person. And, in a little while, constructing a raft, some of them crossed the lagoon beyond the reach of musket shot, and now a fire was opened on the island from both banks.

This was bad enough, but not the worst trouble which Clarence had to meet. His ammunition was almost expended, and he had to order his men to slacken their fire, and only to shoot when a very fair chance occurred, lest the last shot should be gone, and the Indians, learning the fact, should build more rafts and attack them hand-to-hand, when the force of numbers would tell upon them fearfully, and, probably, with a fatal result.

The brave captain volunteered to take a single canoe, and, with three or four of the strongest of the men, to try to run the gauntlet, and go to the fort for assistance. But the attempt seemed to be utter madness in the day-time, and it was, at any rate, deferred until night. Meantime, the Indians, evidently understanding why the fire of the whites had slackened so much, began to build rafts beyond gun-shot, and Clarence knew that a deadly struggle was at hand.

But his heart did not fail. He rejoiced that he was free and had arms in his hands, and could, at least, die like a man with his face to the foe, and not suffer torture as he had anticipated before. Ona he knew would never fall alive into the hands of Coacoochee, for she had sworn it, and had her dagger in her bosom as a means of keeping that oath when dire necessity should call for it.

Night drew on, and Clarence had but a few rounds of ammunition left, and the Indians grew more and more bold every moment. Suddenly a shout of joy broke from the lips of Captain Duke, who was stationed on the end of the island toward Indian River.

"The soldiers are coming! We're saved!" he shouted, and then he ran out upon the bank, and waved a small American ensign which he had brought from his boat.

The soldiers saw it, and cheered in response, while he was glad to take cover again, for the Indian bullets flew like hail around him, grazing him in several places.

The Indians now opened fire upon the boats, but old Captain Winder was in charge of the detachment, and what he didn't know about Indian fighting wasn't worth knowing. He landed his men in two divisions on each bank of the lagoon, extending their lines to flank the enemy, and charged, firing and loading at a run, and keeping cover on the advance. The Indians couldn't stand this, but soon fled, leaving quite a number of their party on the ground, and nearly all the plunder which they had brought from the steamer.

It was a happy moment when Clarence met his old friend Winder, after the skirmish was over, and felt that, with an escort of over one hundred good men, and within sixteen miles of the fort, he was once more safe, and that his chance of placing his loved Ona beyond danger was good.

After a brief rest, Captain Winder put fresh men in the canoes with those of Clarence, and took the back course, and, following his pilot, the flotilla made a rapid passage back to the post at Indian River, which they reached before the dawn of day.

Here Clarence was welcomed by many old comrades and friends, and he also found, to his joy, that a steamer was in which was bound to St. Augustine, up the coast, and would sail in a short time.

Captain Duke, who had been at first very joyful at the escape of his party, now again took the "blues," while he thought mournfully of the loss of his steamer. But a written statement from Clarence and the other survivors, justifying his actions in every particular, and giving him credit for his conduct in every sense, consoled him somewhat—enough, at least, to allow him to "smile" once in a while, when invited.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Saint Augustine—the most ancient, yet the smallest, city of North America. Quaint and antique in its narrow streets, over which neighbors can shake-hands from the porticoes of their ever-lasting stone houses; in its old-time church; in its walls now crumbled, and in its ditches now filled up; and in its massive and strong fort—the prettiest piece of military art in the country. And beautiful in its groves of orange, lemon, citron and lime—in its trees of fig and of magnolia. Lovely, too, in its flowery gardens, but loveliest in its beautiful women, who are as good and pure as they are enchanting. It is a boast of that proud city that but one illegitimate child was ever born there, and its mother was American, not Spanish.

City of Romance, of Poetry, of Chivalry, and of Song! Home of gladness and of festal joys! Happy, happy have been the hours which I have passed within thy limits, dancing feet, and glancing eyes, and joyous hearts around me!

But gone is the light of those blessed days! Cold is the fond heart which there beat for me, for me only! A shadow rests upon my spirit, and it is the hand of Memory which has placed it there.

A few days after the rescue of Clarence and his party, they were safely landed in the ancient city, and the lieutenant and Ona, with Captain Duke, were soon ensconced in Ben Carr's princely hotel, "The Magnolia."

Clarence had many acquaintances in the little city, for his regiment had been posted there, and in a very short time his arrival was made known through the place, and also, through the agency of the warm-hearted and well-meaning Captain Duke, his recent strange and thrilling adventures, and all of the history of Ona which the worthy captain knew—probably a little more, for the good man never let a story shrink any while it was in his custody.

The consequence was that Clarence was completely over-run with calls, and solicitations for an introduction to his heroine. But she could make no new acquaintances just then. By the desire of Clarence, she was very busy in consultation with, and giving directions to, sundry milliners and dress-mak-

ers, through whose fashionable officiousness it soon became known that a wedding was to come off at short notice at the "Magnolia."

Captain Duke was in his glory. He was to have the honor of giving away the bride. He almost forgot the loss of his steamer, and his frequent invitations to "smile all around" made him very popular and profitable at the bar of the hotel.

It took but a few days to make the necessary arrangements, and then, in the presence of as gay and gallant a party as had ever there assembled, Ona Livingston became the wedded wife of Clarence Febiger.

I need not describe the solemn, yet happy ceremony, nor the festive scenes which followed. The reader, without that reader is a luckless bachelor or an old maid, can imagine and appreciate it all better than I can describe it.

Clarence waited only for a few days to receive visits and congratulations, and then, by the first steamer to Savannah, started northward, to visit home and see his loved mother. That his voyage may be prosperous let us hope, while we again cast our eyes southward.

CHAPTER L

The rage of the scalded colonel was furious when he heard that the steamer of Captain Duke had left, and that Clarence Febiger was forever beyond his reach. He exhibited his feelings by singling out every prominent friend of Clarence's, and ordering them on the most severe and unpleasant duty which he could conceive.

When the news came that the steamer of Captain Duke had been totally lost, and the crew and passengers captured by the Indians, he fairly danced up and down with glee. But his joy was dampened when the officer, who previously read the account, in a slow and disconnected manner, announced the escape and gallant conduct of Clarence, and the final rescue of the party.

"He was a noble fellow, and the service lost a jewel in him!" said Captain Fulton.

"A cursed mutinous scoundrel, who left the service to escape the penalty of a court martial!" muttered the colonel.

The officer continued reading the account, and when he came to the splendid reception which Clarence met at the hands of the hospitable citizens of St. Augustine, and his marriage with the beautiful Ona Livingston, the reputed heiress of immense wealth, the wrath of the colonel broke out in curses.

"I don't believe a word of it!" he cried. "It's a newspaper lie!"

The officer who had the paper, purposely added to the already profuse praises and descriptions in the paper, for he, with the officers, vastly enjoyed the annoyance and mortification of the colonel.

But he, unfortunately, had the power to annoy them also, and the very next morning he issued an order for a scout into the malacious region of the Big Cypress, almost always fatal to those who were not acclimated. Captain Fulton was placed in command, and all of the obnoxious officers to his tyrantship, were also detailed.

Unpleasant as this was, orders had to be obeyed, no matter what they were, for rank and power were in his hands, also political influence at the seat of government, and to disobey would have periled the commissions of all subordinates. But many were the left-handed blessings showered upon the head of the tyrant by the sufferers, and had he been dying, it is doubtful whether any of them would have shed a tear, or taken much pains to avert such a fate for him.

It is ever easy for a commanding officer to win the respect and love of all subordinate to him, if he possesses the qualities of a soldier, and the courtesy of a gentleman. But if he lacks these, and plays the part of a tyrant, he still more easily incurs their hatred, and makes for himself a name that can never be restored to lustre.

The expedition proceeded into the everglades, however, very cheerfully, for the hated colonel did not choose to risk his precious person with it, and all knew that the gallant Fulton would render their duty as light as possible for them.

They had been absent nearly a week, when a flag of truce, borne by a negro, with a letter to the commanding officer, reached Captain Fulton. The words of the letter were these:

"If the commanding officer of the American forces will guarantee the safety of the writer, who is a white resident, and non-combatant among the poor and persecuted Seminoles, he would seek an interview with him. He seeks tidings in regard to the welfare of his only child!"

Captain Fulton at once knew that this was from the father of Ona, and he hastened to reply, by a note, which read as follows:

"The friend of Clarence Febiger and the father of his lovely wife, will be welcomed to my camp, and shall be safe to come and go, under the protection of his flag."

FULTON."

He also sent the paper which contained the news from St. Augustine, but this caused him to lose the wished-for interview with Arpiaka, for the latter, instead of coming in person, replied in a letter:

"The father of Ona Livingston, now Febiger, returns his thanks to Captain Fulton, for his courtesy and kindness, but since he has conveyed to me all of the information which I sought, the requested interview is no longer necessary."

"Should Captain Fulton write to his friends, he may say that a father's blessing goes with his child, though he may never see her more."

"With respect,

"ARPIAKA, once LIVINGSTON."

The expedition of Captain Fulton remained out the time named in the orders, but they were not attacked during the trip, nor did they see any Indians, though their smoke signals were very frequently observed.

When he returned, neither he nor his officers made any report about the flag of truce or letters, for they did not deem it necessary. But Captain Fulton did at once write to Clarence, to convey to him the news that Ona's father had been informed of her marriage, and sent his blessing to her.

It is an old adage, I believe, at any rate, it is a true saying, that "bad news flies upon rapid pinions."

Poor Mrs. Febiger had heard of the disappearance and supposed fate of her loved and only son, and the blow had nearly been fatal to her. It had reached her through the daily paper, in which she invariably looked for "News from Florida." The man who penned the paragraph, and who suggested, on his own responsibility of thought, that poor Clarence had probably been roasted, and, perhaps, eaten, little dreamed what a pang he caused by what he really thought was witty on his part. Newspaper writers, who dash off articles merely to fill up, seldom pause to think of the harm they may do, or the woe they may bring by a careless line or two, or an "embellishment of facts," as they term an extra lie or two, or some suggestive witticism—Heaven save the mark!—upon those who do not know the tricks of the trade, and that some editors, like the generality of lawyers, get so used to lying, that they only tell the truth by accident. A political editor who will not lie till all is blue for his party, isn't worth damning. Even religious editors will lie roundly for their sect, as their ministers will almost swear that the road they've macadamized is the only "through route" to heaven.

Messrs. Blacking and Queer, who, like wine well put up, really improved by age, and most singularly and unaccountably for the age and its custom, became better, more honest and less grasping, as they accumulated wealth, called upon her at an early hour, not only to offer their sympathy and condolence, but, far better, to give to her sad heart hope that her son had escaped, and would yet be restored to her. This thought, enlivened by them, helped her to bear her sorrow, and, to a great degree, enabled her to meet and bear a shock of pleasure which she received long weeks afterward, when she had become almost reconciled to the thought of believing him dead.

This shock came in this way: One morning, very early—she had, however, risen, for she was not one of those *she lazinesses* that thinks it necessary to shelter in bed till noon—the servant announced Counsellor Blacking and Mr. Amasa Queer.

"Something unusual has surely brought them here at this early hour!" said she, as she ordered the servant to admit them at once. "They must have heard from Clarence! Yet there is no news from Florida in the *Herald* this morning. I have looked it all over!"

"Good-morning, my dear Mrs. Febiger!" said Blacking, in his smooth, calm way.

"Good morning, my dear Mrs. Febiger!" said Mr. Amasa Queer, rather nervously, the corner of his lips twitching as if there was something in his mouth which wanted to get out.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," said the widow, gently, and with a cheerful voice. "Take seats. I know that you have brought me good news, by your looks. You have heard from my dear Clarence!"

"Wonderful, surprising, that you should anticipate our errand!" said Mr. Blacking.

"Extraordinary, astonishing, really, isn't it?" said Mr. Queer, who could not sit still, but moved about as if he had a mustard-plaster beneath him—*pardon the simile, reader, for I have been sick recently, and know the feelings which such a plaster produces.*

"Yes, my dear madam, I am happy to say that we have heard from Clarence, your brave and gallant son!"

"Is he *alive*?" asked Mrs. F., in a tone and with a look of deep anxiety.

"Alive, dear madam!" said Blacking.

"And married! he! he! ho! ho!" cried Queer, breaking out in one of his queer laughs. "I'll make his children heirs to my property, so I will—alive and married—he! he! ho! ho! ho!"

Mr. Queer got up, and improvised a *solo quadrille* all over the carpet, to celebrate his joy upon the occasion.

Mr. Blacking, however, more coolly produced the paper containing the account of Clarence's adventures, marriage, etc., and proceeded, with his usual precise deliberation, to read it. The eyes of the widow glittered with tears while she listened to the narration, but they were tears of joy which filled her blue eyes, and they laid there like dew upon the flowers, glittering in the early sunlight.

The counsellor had just finished the newspaper account when a servant entered, bringing a letter which had been left by the postman.

"From Clarence!" she murmured, as she broke the seal.

"Please read it aloud, if it is not too private!" said Mr. Blacking.

"Do, dear madam, I am dying to hear what the noble boy says about himself and about—about getting married!" cried Mr. Queer.

The widow could not refuse, and she read:

"Dear mother, I write in haste to say to you that I am coming home to you, never to leave you again, for I have resigned from the service. I shall reach you almost as soon as this letter will. And I shall bring home a precious treasure with me, in the shape of the prettiest, best, dearest little wife that ever made a husband happy."

"That's what *all* men say of their wives!" said Mr. Queer.

"When they are *first* married!" said Mr. Blacking, with more truth than gallantry.

Mrs. F. did not reply to these remarks, but continued reading the letter.

"What will astonish you even more than that, my dear mother, is the information that I have met my father, had him in my own company for a year as a soldier without knowing it, for he enlisted under another name. A better man in conduct could not be found in the army, and at last he died in the act of saving my life, and while dying recognized the father of my Ona, Arthur Livingston, who had married Lone Sinclair. It is a wonderful story, which I cannot fully explain until I meet you, which will be, very, very soon.

Ever your affectionate boy,

"CLARENCE."

"Wonderful—*most* wonderful!" cried Blacking.

"It beats any novel that was ever written!" cried Mr. Queer.

"I will force old Ribera to disgorge every cent that he owed poor Mr. Febiger, your deceased husband!" said Blacking. "It will be a fortune for the young couple, aside from that which belongs to Miss Livingston, or rather Mrs. Clarence Febiger, in her own right!"

"There's one thing that I'm sorry for!" said Mr. Queer, abstractedly.

"What is it, brother Queer?" asked the counsellor.

"That they got married before they got home—you could have given away the bride, and I—I could have danced at the wedding!" cried Mr. Queer.

CHAPTER LII.

"A CARRIAGE at the door, madam—a carriage and an express wagon with baggage, and a gentleman and a lady!" said a servant, entering just after Mrs. Febiger had closed the letter.

"Oh, my God—my son!" said Mrs. Febiger, and she tried to rise, but a sudden faintness came over her.

"Water!" cried Mr. Blacking.

"Burnt feathers!" suggested Mr. Queer, hurrying to her assistance.

But she needed neither when the well-known form of Clarence burst into the room, for she rose and rushed into his arms, bursting into a flood of tears as she did so.

Such tears are only an outlet to a heart overcharged with joy, and relieve it in a moment.

And Mrs. Febiger was more calm when her son turned and placed the hand of his sweet Ona in hers. More embracing, more kissing, more sobbing, but all indicative of excessive joy.

After a few moments of this feeling, Mrs. Febiger was calm enough to introduce the counsellor and Mr. Queer to Clarence and his wife as very dear friends, who, in her hours of trouble, had proved true and trusty.

"Rest assured that I shall never forget you, gentlemen!" said Clarence, after the usual salutations had passed.

"And we—we will remember you in—in *our wills!* Won't we, brother Blacking?" said Queer, almost crying for joy.

"Most assuredly, Amasa!" said the lawyer. Then turning to Ona, he added: "I am your father's agent, sweet lady, and any money you want you can draw!"

"I believe I have some papers for you to look at!" said she, mildly; "but we will not mar the happiness of this hour by speaking or thinking of business!"

"No; I feel as if I could sing and dance like a boy just let out of school!" said Mr. Queer.

"Let us go, Amasa! let us go, for Mr. Febiger has much to say to his mother, which we, old covies, have no business to hear!" said Mr. Blacking.

"You must return at four, gentlemen, to dine with us!" said the widow.

"Yes; our happiness will not be complete without you!" added Clarence.

"We'll come; and if I don't send up some of Osborn's old port and some of Benninger's amontillada, I'll never put a foot in Wall street!" cried Mr. Queer.

The two old gentlemen now departed arm in arm; Mr. Blacking with a livelier step than usual, and Mr. Queer giving a hop and a skip every little while, as he went along, like a little fairy whom I know, named Blanche, when she is on her way to a fair.

"Let's go to the Tontine, brother Blacking, and there renew in a 'pony' of brandy, the covenant which we made many, many years ago!" cried Mr. Queer.

"Under the circumstances, I believe I will!" said Mr. Blacking. "I see no impropriety in it!"

And they proceeded "unanimously" to carry the motion into effect, nothing occurring to interrupt them, except a petition from a poor devil of a broken down editor to Queer to discount a note of fifty dollars for him.

"Here's the fifty dollars: curse the note!" said Mr. Queer, not unkindly, however.

"When shall I pay you? this relief is too kind, sir; when shall I pay you?" asked the astonished knight of the quill.

"When you are rich and happy, like me—go along now, not another word!" and he hurried on toward the Tontine.

The poor editor shook his head sorrowfully, and murmured: "That will never, never be! It's not down in the books. 'Tis neither written in heaven, known on earth, or dreamed of below. If I could find a rich and happy editor, I would make my fortune by exhibiting him at sixpence a peep! A happy editor! Barnum would hunt the world over, if he heard of one, but what he'd have him! Get out with your woolly horses, your Joyce Heath's, nigger-baby-

shows and codfish mermaids! Just show me a *live*, rich, happy editor, or tell me that one ever lived!"

And away rushed the editor, with the enormous amount of fifty dollars in his pocket, determined to have a "burst" on a plate of clam soup and a three-penny glass of beer.

Years had passed since the Florida war had been declared at an end by the gallant Worth, yet a few more invincible spirits still refused to migrate to the west, a few noble Seminoles clung to the land of their fathers and the graves of their sires, a staunch and Spartan band, who deserved a better fate than to be hunted down and butchered by the hired menials of the government. But, at last, driven almost to desperation, their crops and homes all destroyed, their ammunition all expended, and their last bows broken, nearly all of them surrendered, with "Bow-legs," their last war-chief, and consented to migrate to the land of the setting sun.

But still a few remained, hidden away in the dark and gloomy shades of the Big Cypress, from which the sharp-fanged hounds of their foes could not drive them. They were the devoted followers of Arpiaka, the "White Wizard," now dwindled down to a very few in number, but still faithful to him whom they revered for his goodness and his wisdom.

Known to the whites as "Sam Jones," he had eluded every attempt to capture him, and had only been seen on one or two occasions by them during the whole war. He was never known to use arms in any battle, but he ever proved himself true to those who had adopted him, and if he yet lives he is true to them, for he never will leave the land of his adoption, the clime where sleeps all that is mortal of his lost Ione. When last heard from he was very old, his hair white as the driven snow, and his eye-sight so dim that he could scarcely note the changing hues of heaven in sunshine or in storm. Letters have often passed between him and his loved child, but he has never seen her or Clarence since, though beautiful children have grown up for them, and they have been blessed with great happiness.

Clarence has recently built a very handsome country-seat on the Caroosahatchie River, where he spends his winters, and whether two old gentlemen, who are very fond of his children, accompany him invariably. I need not tell you who they are.

Mrs. Marcus Febiger is gliding like an autumn leaf upon a golden river, slowly down the tide of life, loving Ona almost as much as her husband does, and no mortal ought to be loved more.

Wealthy, honored, respected by all who know them, the Febigers, either at their splendid home in the Fifth avenue, their summer cottage up the Hudson, or at their beautiful residence in Florida, are HAPPY.

Captain Duke still runs a boat in the U. S. service. Reader, my story is told. I hope you feel as if you had got your money's worth. It is my private opinion that you have."

THE END.

The New York Library.

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